

Children of To-Morrow



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Clara E. Laughlin

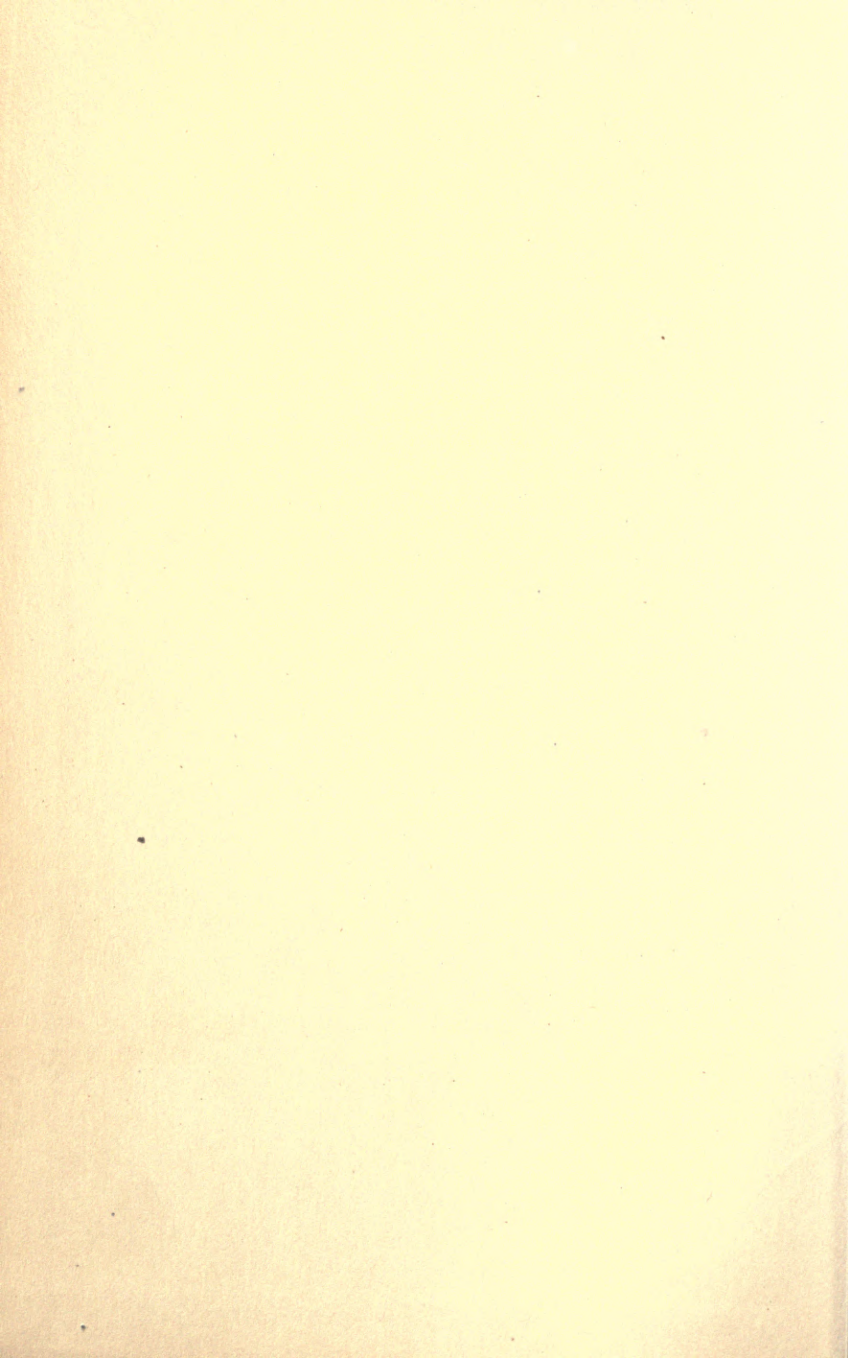
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CHILDREN OF TO-MORROW



"Is that true, Rose? Do you wish me to keep out?"

CHILDREN OF TO-MORROW

BY
CLARA E. LAUGHLIN

AUTHOR OF "FELICITY"

ILLUSTRATED BY
LUCIUS W. HITCHCOCK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
NEW YORK ::::::::::::::: 1911

TO KESKLINE
WORKS OF

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PART I

CHILDREN OF TO-MORROW

CHAPTER I

THE GOVERNOR'S FAMILY

"IT'S going to be a hard summer; I doubt if I shall be able to get away for more than a day or two—a Saturday and Sunday—at a time."

The Governor and his family had finished dining and were in the library of the old Mansion which had been their home for the past six months.

It was the end of June, and very hot. School sessions were over; social activities had lapsed; "everybody"—in Mrs. Innes's phrase—had gone or was on the eve of going away. It behooved the State's first family, she thought, to consider how the vacation from official cares should be spent.

She looked up sharply when the Governor said he could not get away.

"Nonsense!" she said. "You didn't undertake to kill yourself for the State."

"I undertook to discharge the duties of the governorship," he answered, quietly; "and I

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didn't qualify: 'unless they interfere with my pleasure.' "

"This isn't your pleasure—it's your necessary rest, and your obligation to your family."

The Governor smiled understandingly.

"I'm not tired, Julia," he said. "I—perhaps it's hard for you to understand, but I'm not on this job for the pay, or even for the honor, but for the opportunity it gives me to do what I want to do more than anything else in the world. I'd rather be here—where my chance is—than anywhere. But I want you to go any place you choose; and I give you my word that a governor's family banks just as strong without him as if they had him along for proof."

If Mrs. Innes was aware of the irony in her husband's speech, she ignored it; even he could never tell just what she comprehended.

"And what will people say! The Governor's family at the mountains or sea-shore, enjoying themselves, and the Governor alone in the hot, deserted Capital. *I* know how people talk!"

A shadow of impatience clouded the Governor's eyes for a moment, then lifted again. The futility, the wasted energy, of allowing one's self to become irritated with a life companion who "never could understand"!

"Anybody whose opinion matters—or ought to matter," he rejoined, "knows what the situation

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here is, this summer; knows that I'd be a fool to try to get away from it; and a selfish wretch if I let you and the children stay here because I have to. You've worked pretty hard on this job yourself, Julia"—here, again, was a covert sarcasm which the Governor would never know if his wife understood—"and a change will do you good. I don't suppose you'll rest—you'll carry the job with you wherever you go—but the change will help. And the children need it, too. Now, where do you want to go?"

The conversation had reached a stage where the boys felt interested. The course of it hitherto had been familiarly dull. Through long acquaintance with discussion in their family circle, they had learned that always, at the outset, just about so much time was spent by their father in persuading their mother to do what he knew she had all along intended, and by their mother in endeavoring to persuade their father to do what she knew all along there was not the remotest chance of his doing. The boys had cultivated the faculty of withdrawing themselves from the dull preliminaries and, almost by instinct, returning to the argument when it was ready really to begin.

They were instantly alert when their father asked: "Where do you want to go?"

"Coney Island!" said Johnny promptly.

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His father smiled. "For a day, perhaps," he said; "but not for all summer."

Johnny looked surprised. "Why, Pop!" he cried, starting to explain.

"Johnny!"

"Oh, cheese it, Mom—I mean, excuse me; but I can't always remember to say pop-*pa*!"

"And I can't always remember whom you mean when you *do* say it," his father chuckled.

Mrs. Innes looked at her husband reprovingly. "Well, I consider 'Pop' a most undignified and disrespectful way of addressing you," she said, "and I'm sure I don't know what kind of bringing up people must think I give my children. It was bad enough before we came here; but now, in our position—" Her voice trailed off into indefinite protest.

Again the brief shadow of irritation in her husband's eyes, quickly succeeded by the expression: Oh, well! what is the use?

"Say 'pop-pa,' Johnny, and go ahead," he adjured his son. And so entirely respectful were his tone and manner that again it was impossible to tell if Mrs. Innes knew his acquiescence came from courtesy and not from conviction.

Johnny continued his plea for a vacation "where you can have some fun." Davy thought they should go where they could see something new and instructive—"like the Rocky Moun-

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tains." Mrs. Innes wanted "good society; not a place where there are just hotels and transients, but a place where there are lovely summer homes. Hotels are so promiscuous."

"They have ice-cream every day," reminded Johnny, who was willing to overlook any degree of promiscuity for his stomach's sake; though, truth to tell, Johnny loved promiscuity next best to ice-cream.

The Governor's daughter sat on the arm of his chair.

"Well, Rosie," he said, "how about you?"

"No use asking that," her mother interposed; "she never has any choice."

"I resent that, on Rosie's behalf," her father answered. "You *have* a choice—haven't you, sweetest?"

Rose hugged her father before she replied. "Not too far away from *you*," she whispered.

"There! I knew it! Who says our sister-bud hasn't decided notions?"

Mrs. Innes's lip curled scornfully. "If she were a boy, you'd talk up to her sharply enough and tell her to have some mind of her own. But as she's a girl, you think she's better without one."

"Are you without a mind, my Rose? Let me look at you!" His hand beneath her delicate chin, he studied the fair, flower-like little face for

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a moment, then kissed her softly on each eyelid and drew her closer into his arms.

Governor Lyman Innes was a slender man, rather under than over medium height, and shaped on aristocratic lines. His dark hair was thinning, and beginning to be frosted with gray. He had flashing dark eyes, and hands noticeably fine and expressive. The mouth his small dark mustache only partly concealed was a little weak, a little sensuous; but one felt that the spirit expressed in the remarkable eyes was the spirit in control. For the rest, one's first impression of him took note of the facts that he was immaculately groomed and that he was a punctiliously neat dresser.

Lyman Innes was in his forty-ninth year. He was born of excellent family, but left fatherless at an early age and obliged to hew his own way in the world. The business he entered as an errand boy eventually admitted him to partnership and soon thereafter passed into his control. In his veins was the blood of ancestors who had hated the persecution of the Quakers, and the blood of a great-grandfather who had signed the Declaration of Independence, and of a grandfather who had been one of the earliest Abolitionists in New England. It was his heritage to hate injustice; and it was the name he had made himself as a considerate and fair employer which went far toward getting him the governorship in this State

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where labor troubles had for some time threatened to become openly serious.

Julia Livingston had brought him money. She had been considered a clever girl and most people believed she would make an excellent helpmeet for Lyman Innes, already—when he married—a well-established and a “rising” man. But their dream of success was not the same dream. She was everywhere spoken of as having been a great aid to her husband, with her energy, her skill in practical affairs, her ambition for him. But he knew—if she did not—that all she shared in his success was the enjoyment of its emoluments. She was a thin, sharp woman with pale-blue eyes and frizzy light hair. Her speech was quick and nervous, leading her into many bursts of tactlessness. It was her firm conviction that her methods—of housekeeping, of entertaining, of dressing, of bringing up her children and of managing her husband—were superior to any other methods conceivable. This gave her a certain unassailable satisfaction, but contributed nothing appreciable to her popularity.

David Innes was fair, like his mother. He shared others of her characteristics, too. In the main, she approved of Davy. But on those infrequent occasions when their wills clashed, the struggle was bitter indeed because one will was moulded by purposes so like those that moulded the other.

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The most frequent cause of conflict between Davy and his mother was Johnny. Davy was past fifteen; Johnny was thirteen and a half, a winsome lad, full of flashing charm. His great dark eyes were sometimes all melting tenderness and irresistible appeal, but oftener dancing with unmalicious mischief and the sheer joyousness of being alive. A strikingly white, fine skin had Johnny, and the whitest of white teeth; while his dark hair had, to his intense disgust, a slight tendency to curl—to conceal which Johnny usually wheedled the barber into cropping his head till it looked almost shaved. Every visit he made to the barber's was the precursor of a maternal storm into which Davy was regularly drawn by his defence of Johnny's attitude toward curly hair.

That ancestor of Lyman Innes's who had defended Quakers was a gay Cavalier; having no particular religion of his own which he considered the only true one, he had a dislike of seeing any man's religion interfered with. His portrait, copied from one in the ancestral Hall overseas, was one of Lyman Innes's most treasured possessions. It hung in the library of the Governor's Mansion—one of the personal belongings brought hither to create an atmosphere more like home—and Johnny was frequently adjured by his father to consider the flowing curls of that gallant gentleman whose behavior he so greatly admired.

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But no! "They're all right if you like 'em," Johnny agreed; "but I *don't*." Nevertheless, he was very like that curled Cavalier, even with his head most ruthlessly cropped; very like all those among his ancestry who had worn plumed hats and jewelled swords; who had fought heartily, gamed heavily, drunk deeply, sung jovially, loved tempestuously (and often), and been the dear particular comrade of every one except those with whom they had a temperamental quarrel. Not only was life extraordinarily interesting—every moment of it—to Johnny; but, also, he made it very vivid even to prosaic Davy, because Davy adored him so.

The annals of the two brothers, as treasured by their wide family circle unto the third and fourth remove of cousinship, were very rich in illuminating anecdote; as, for example: When Johnny was about six, his father, on leaving the house one summer morning, noted the man-of-all-work cutting the grass on their front lawn. "Take that nice sweet grass down to your 'Bossy' in the back lot," he had directed Johnny. "Get a small basket that you can carry comfortably—or fill a bigger one and haul it on your wagon." "Yes, sir," said Johnny, dutifully. Johnny always agreed to anything—at the time; always meant to do it, in fact, for he was the soul of obligingness. Perhaps it wasn't his fault if the counter-attraction which inevitably presented itself usually had stronger

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charms. He carried one basketful of grass to Bossy—and then became ecstatically diverted. At noon his father saw the little piles of grass still lying on the lawn, and asked for an explanation. “Whyee,” began Johnny, smiling up engagingly at his parent and casting about in his mind for something to say, “it was this way: I tooked her one basketful and I—and I was just comin’ back fer another; and she—and she says—says: ‘This will be plenty, thank you, Johnny.’” It is reported that Davy blushed for the unblushing Johnny, and that as soon as they two were alone together he took Johnny solemnly to task. “Johnny,” he was overheard to say, “you know *cows* don’t talk.” “Sure thing, they do!” Johnny rejoined, quickly. “Haven’t you ever heard ’em?” And so convincing was his manner that Davy felt there was nothing more to be said. Always while he was with Johnny he was awed by the magnificent audacity of the stories Johnny dared to tell. But when Johnny was away from him, and his return was overdue—which his returns nearly always were—Davy was given to the sharpest anxiety as to what might suitably have befallen that precious but graceless young person who held the truth in such slight regard.

Thus the Governor’s sons. His daughter Rose was his youngest-born. One would be glad—so glad!—to be able to tell just how Rose Innes looked as a child of twelve; but it is impossible—

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just as impossible as it always was, later. Few women have been more written about, and less described; more painted, and less pictured. The reason being, of course, that Rose had no fixed identity. She reflected the best that was around her. She was, as was exquisitely to be said of her, "everybody's sweetest dream come true." When one tried to be specific, to get away from generalities, all that could be said about her—as child or maiden or woman—was that she was fair in coloring and slight in figure, and that her whole personality might be summed up in another phrase she was to inspire, "that wistfulness to be loved, which was her genius." Broadly generalizing, it might be said that Rose's father loved her because she could understand what she was told—he talked to her of his ideals more freely than to any other person; and her mother loved her because she *did* what she was told and gave promise of being an excellent little domestic body; and Johnny loved her because she believed all she was told and never questioned anything in the splendid world of romance he lived in and to which he welcomed her; while Davy—ah, well! Davy loved her for every reason there is or could be. Some one once said she was "Davy's religion." It was true, if not all of the truth.

The result of the conference was that they decided on a place on the New Jersey shore, near

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enough so that the Governor could get there often for week-ends; "select" enough in its cottage colony to satisfy Mrs. Innes; and sufficiently close to Atlantic City to fulfil Johnny's dream of Coney Island.

"I'm sorry about the Rocky Mountains, Dave," the Governor said; "but I'm sure they'll 'keep.'"

"Can't *swim* in the Rocky Mountains," reminded Johnny, consolingly—those of us who get our wish can always think of consolations suitable for our disappointed brothers—"and I tell you I'm going to do some great stunts of high diving this summer. Wait till you see me! Gee!"

Carried away by the joy in prospect, Johnny mounted the chair on which he had been perching, as if it were a spring-board, and poised himself for a dive.

"Johnny!"

His mother's horrified tone recalled Johnny to the proprieties; but it was not in Johnny's temperament to come down without one spring. He made the leap, doubled up like a jack-knife, and landed in a sitting posture. But the chair springs gave way; there was a sound of ripping burlap underneath; and Johnny found himself tangled in a deep pocket of disorganized upholstery. The opportunity for mirthfulness delighted Johnny; he never minded in the least being made ridiculous if he could get a good laugh out of it. But his mother soon checked his mirth.

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"Such behavior!" she cried, indignantly. "People might think you never had any bringing up. I declare! I'm discouraged."

"Anybody that knows you, Julia," the Governor assured her dryly, "knows that he has had bringing up. But I'm sorry, son," turning to Johnny, "about the chair. It belongs to the State, you know. Of course we'll have it repaired, but we can't ask the State to pay the bill. The only fair and square thing, that I can see, is for you to pay for it out of your pocket-money."

"Oh, Pop!"

"I know; it means complete destitution all summer—and Atlantic City so near! But I'll tell you, son—this is for Davy's sake as well as yours, because I know he'd lend you all of his—if you'll promise not to borrow of Davy *once*, all summer, I'll pay the repair bill and take it out of your allowance a little at a time; so you'll only have to give up *half* your pleasures."

"I think that's all very absurd," Mrs. Innes pronounced, decidedly. "For my part, I think the State ought to clear out all this old rubbishy furniture and fix the house up decently. It's ridiculous to ask people to come here and put up with this, when they have to leave so much better at home."

"The State didn't ask us to come here," Lyman Innes reminded her. "We nearly broke

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our necks—if you'll pardon the vulgarism—to get the job. And the Mansion isn't supposed to be the prize—it's the power of law and order in a great commonwealth that's supposed to attract a man who's made governor. The Mansion is old, but its memories are fine; and it's comfortable——”

“*You* may find it comfortable because *I* make it so. But you don't have to keep house in it. I'd rather have procelain bath tubs than fine memories. And all this old Civil-War-time furniture makes me ashamed. I suppose some people who come here think it's *ours*—or, at least, that I don't know any better!”

This was possibly the one hundred and eightieth time—in six months—that this subject had been raised by Julia Innes for discussion. Her first demand, on reaching the Mansion, had been to sweep everything out of it into the discard and refurnish throughout. Failing that, she thought she should at least be allowed to rehabilitate. Lyman Innes pleaded that it was his ideal to have no extravagance—personal or departmental—charged against his administration. It was Julia Innes's theory that “the more you cost, the more you are appreciated. Look at the European kings!” And to suggest that the appreciation of expensive kings is not universal was only to prolong the argument.

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"This isn't our home, Julia," Lyman Innes always reminded her; "we're camping here while we serve the State. Suppose I should ever have to call out the militia—which God forbid!—and they were to camp here in the State-House grounds, as they've been known to do. Would you go into any soldier's tent and judge his ideals of comfort by what the State provides him with while he's on duty?" To this Julia Innes invariably replied: "We're not the militia"; which was so self-evident that there was never anything more to say.

Perhaps this is as good a place as any to record that the Governor paid out of his own pocket for the repair of the chair springs, and deducted the amount from Johnny's allowance at the rate of fifty cents a week. Also, that his wife regularly made up to Johnny the fifty cents which Johnny's father believed the boy was paying to learn a fine principle. This she was prompted to do by her maternal pride in Johnny's charms—to which, as was usual wherever Johnny went, everybody at their sea-side resort fell easily captive. Far oftener—Mrs. Innes found—than she was spoken of as Governor Innes's wife was she referred to as Johnny Innes's mother. Johnny had pretty manners—company manners—born of his desire to please, and not at all, as his mother fondly believed, of her continual admonishing. She felt that he reflected credit upon her method of

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bringing up; and without exactly meaning to, she let Johnny find out that she felt this. Altogether, as some deploring on-looker once observed: "If all the women in the world had been 'lined up' to discover which one should least of all have been Johnny Innes's mother, the judgment would have fallen unhesitatingly on Lyman Innes's wife." Some few who knew him best, surmised that Lyman Innes was desperately aware of this. But no one had ever heard him intimate as much; and in what he did, hoping to save his son, he never discounted his wife's teachings—he only strove to supplement them with others of a better sort.

And yet——!

CHAPTER II

THE WOMAN WHO HELPED

THE troubles Lyman Innes had feared thickened rapidly. Strikes were newer fifteen years ago, and the public was less accustomed to them. Then, as now, the demands of a few hundreds, or thousands, of working-men—whether right or wrong—interested the great body of the public practically not at all, until the cessation of some form of labor made the public suffer inconvenience. Then, instantly, everybody had an opinion, and it was that “a few disgruntled laborers should not be allowed to inconvenience the community.”

This strike that was giving Lyman Innes vast concern was doing more than inconveniencing the community. It was paralyzing an industry on which many communities depended, not for their convenience alone but for their commerce, which, as society was organized in those communities, meant their life. When the wheels of commerce stopped, existence was menaced, for the majority.

The Governor was appealed to. He was urged to call out the militia, to authorize its officers to

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set guards over the wheels restored to motion, and to order volleys fired against any show of resistance. This he was unwilling to do because, as it happened, he knew the cause of the striking men was just; because, as it happened, his experience gave him understanding, and he could look ahead and see what it would mean to the development of liberty, in this country of boasted freedom, if that perfectly legitimate demand of self-respecting labor were denied at the point of the bayonet.

It was an agonizing crisis. The country was watching him, demanding of him. All day long, and every day, he was besieged with delegations representing this interest and that. Everybody who came knew exactly what he ought to do—had a clear vision of his duty; some claimed to have evolved the solution they offered; some declared they had received theirs of God. To the latter, Innes could only quote Lincoln's reply to the Illinois preachers who went to Washington to tell him that it was the will of God that he should free the slaves; whereat Lincoln expressed surprise that "in a matter so clearly involving my duty, God should not have *told me*."

Nor were those who could come in person all. Hundreds who could not come wrote letters. And every newspaper in the country pointed out to him what he must do to save the situation and to be himself politically saved.

The Woman Who Helped

Julia Innes, at the sea-side, "felt the situation," as she wrote him, "deeply. Everybody wonders why you don't act, and I'm sure some of these people think there's something queer about you—maybe about all of us!—because you don't. I am mortified almost to death. This horrid strike has spoiled my summer. I don't see what you can be thinking of—when one little word from you would fix everything."

He wanted to go and address the strikers; to tell them that he knew their cause was just, but to ask them, in the interest of the common good, to name a basis whereon, for the present, they would compromise. But his advisers were aghast. "It'd kill you!" they cried with one voice. "Politically, you'd be a dead man. You'd lose the labor vote if you suggested compromise, and you'd lose the conservative vote if you announced your sympathy with the strikers."

"Then let me go to the employers—I'm an employer of labor—or I was, at least—and I understand; they'll listen to me."

"Listen to you?" he was told. "Of course they will! And take your measure carefully; and the next time you need a new suit of executive clothes you won't get them—because there'll be nobody to pay the bill!"

And when he pleaded—in all truthfulness—that he would rather be "right once, than gov-

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ernor twice," he was sharply adjured to remember that he represented his political party and that he had no right to carry it down with him to that contumely which would entail defeat.

The heat of that summer was intense, and the suffering was very great—not only among the strikers' families, but among the thousands of others who, as always, shared perforce the penalties of war. It was the non-combatants' cries of anguish that rent Lyman Innes's heart most distressfully.

Only two things helped him to stand steadfast through all that storm. One was Lincoln—any and every record he could get of Lincoln's supreme *loneness* in the early, and even in a measure in the latter, War years; after a long day of severest trial, he would sit, almost until the next day broke, drawing strength and comfort from those heart-breaking records. One help was Lincoln—and the other was a woman.

One had only to look at Lyman Innes to know that he had more than ordinary susceptibility to women; his mouth betrayed that instantly. But he had, too, a counterbalancing tendency expressed in his flashing eyes; he was an idealist—not a sentimental, dreamy, sensuous idealist, but an energetic, determined striver after ideals clearly within his vision and probably within his not-too-ultimate reach. Many men among

The Woman Who Helped

Lyman Innes's contemporaries had bigger and finer dreams than his; and many of them were greatly ennobled by these splendid dreams, even though no prospect of realization ever stayed more than momentarily to encourage them. On the other hand, though, there is grave danger for any but spiritually strong men whose reach so habitually exceeds their grasp that they never clutch anything more tangible than thin air; sharp reactions come, and the dreamer not superhumanly strong has horrid slumps, sometimes. Lyman Innes was by no means superhumanly strong; and it was an excellent thing for him that the ideals he pursued were not too terribly elusive. He caught up with them rather frequently, and the next beyond were never discouragingly far ahead. Thus he was kept interested and alertly in love with life, and the exasperating mistake of his marriage did not fret him unbearably; women, and the hope of finding happiness with them, plagued him less than they might have done.

This summer, though, he was in a position to be quite cruelly tempted, if temptation came his way. And it came—as it has a cunning way of doing when the forces of resistance are least able to withstand a siege.

The pressure of extra correspondence, brought on by wide-spread public interest in the strike, made necessary a larger clerical force in the Execu-

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tive Offices. It would have been impossible for the Governor to read one-tenth of the letters that came to him; although, in his deep anxiety to do right, he was unwilling to neglect any of them, lest somewhere among the many there might be some suggestion he would do well to heed. It was the same with newspaper editorials. He wanted, in addition to a second secretary whose especial care all this extra correspondence should be, some one to take charge of the letters and papers; to read them sympathetically, painstakingly, and turn over to him with helpful comment those most likely to interest him. He tried a number of persons about the Capitol on this latter; two or three secretaries from other departments, and even a newspaper correspondent—not one of those sent there to “cover” the strike, for they were too busy, but a man out of a job who had come to the Capital to see if he could not pick up material for some special articles. He got the opportunity of a lifetime, in the Governor’s correspondence; but he wasn’t equal to it, either for the special articles or for the Governor’s aid. When he failed, some one suggested a woman. “They’re more conscientious about some things, and perhaps more sympathetic.” The Governor was willing to try. He instructed his private secretary to see if he could find a competent woman who would undertake the job. The pri-

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vate secretary replied that he could find any number of women who would undertake the job, but that he couldn't presume to judge, beforehand, which among them might be competent. "Perhaps I can," said the Governor. "You get them here and I'll try to make a choice."

That was a rash undertaking; after he had interviewed the first dozen applicants, the Governor declared that attempting to decide what was the right thing to do about the strike was as nothing compared with attempting to find that qualified woman letter-reader.

"Give it up—or pick one yourself," he told the private secretary; "but don't send any more of them in here. I never supposed there were so many 'impossible' females alive. My gallantry has had an awful shock."

Late in the day, Perkins—the private secretary—came into the Governor's room and said, "Well! I've engaged one for a trial. Will you see her?"

"No. You tell her what we want—give her a batch of letters—and ask her to report to me tomorrow. I can tell better then."

The next morning before ten o'clock, Perkins reported that "the lady letter-reader" was there, but that she had come to resign her job.

"She seems all cut up about it," he added, "and I'm sorry—for I think she was the one you want."

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After yesterday's experience—with all those women he was sure he didn't want but who were so sure he did that they almost insisted on coming anyway—the Governor's interest was piqued by the woman, probably qualified, who wouldn't stay. His first impulse was to take none of his over-taxed time for the unattainable. Then something as old as Adam made him want to see that woman; and as unwittingly as most men have done so, he put himself in the hands of his fate.

"Ask her if she won't step in here for a moment," he said to Perkins. A few seconds later, Perkins ushered her in.

"Your Excellency, this is Mrs. Bardeen," he said, and withdrew.

The Governor rose to greet a woman rather above medium height and of a build inclining to plumpness. She had very large, very dark-brown eyes whose gentleness—that might at any moment become tenderness—of expression was the first thing one noticed about her. The next—it was a day of waists made surplice fashion and collarless—was the exquisite beauty and softness of her throat. She was dressed very plainly, in a black-and-white checked gingham dress probably of her own making. Her hat was a simple shade hat such as a woman wears not for coquetry but for protection against the sun. All this one took in at

The Woman Who Helped

a glance, without, however, becoming more than dimly conscious of anything but the changing expressions of those big brown eyes, and the intoxicating loveliness of that satin-soft throat. She was, perhaps, thirty-five years of age; a woman, one would guess, who had matured slowly and was only now entering upon the heyday of her attractiveness.

Her voice had a beautiful low pitch, and she spoke without haste, though she was obviously embarrassed.

"I am so sorry," she began, when she had acknowledged his greeting. "I should have loved the work better than anything I ever dreamed of getting to do. But my husband was not willing. I came here yesterday without saying anything to him—I was afraid he would feel sensitive. We need the money. He is secretary to one of the big employers whose places are closed down by the strike; there is little to be done in the offices, so most of the clerical force has been laid off, my husband among the rest. 'No money coming in, we must stop money going out,' his employer says. It's the fortune of war, I suppose. We weren't ready for it—I suppose that's an average fate, too—and I thought I'd see what I could do to—to help withstand the siege. But my husband was—was quite unwilling."

"What were his obj— I beg your pardon! I

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didn't mean to be impertinent; but I couldn't help wondering——”

“I never find impertinence where I am sure none is felt,” she answered, smiling. “It is a little hard for me to tell you, but I dare say—after reading a few of these letters and editorials—that my little explanation will hardly do more than amuse you. You see, my husband is very anxious to have the strike ended, and he—he——”

“He thinks I'm not doing all I might to end it?”

She nodded.

“And you? Is this an impertinence? You?”

She flushed.

“Don't answer, please—I beg you!” he entreated. “I had no right——”

“Oh yes, you had,” she interrupted him. “Every human creature who is trying, in the face of terrible opposition, to do what he believes to be his duty has a right to look among his fellow-creatures for some sign of sympathy.”

“To look, yes; but not to ask.”

“Well, perhaps not,” she granted him. “But we'll agree that your question slipped unawares from look to speech. And as everybody tells me my looks are more telltale than my speech, I may as well answer you directly; you'd surmise it from my expression, anyway. I'm in sympa-

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thy with the strikers, and—with you. That's the trouble."

"Thank you," he said gravely, and somehow just then he couldn't think of anything more to say.

She, too, was silent for a moment. Then she handed him a little packet of half a dozen letters.

"I think you will want to read these," she suggested. "There are things in all of them you will want to know. This one"—untying the packet and indicating a particular letter among the six—"from a striker's wife, will uphold you quite wonderfully, I'm sure, when you are—urged to call out the militia. I am so sorry, as I said at first, that I cannot do this work, for I know a good deal about conditions among the strikers—and I know how little they deserve to be shot."

What she further said, in making her departure, the Governor did not know. He was not even conscious of replying to her. All he could realize was that she had been there, with her understanding and her sympathy—and that intoxicating white throat—and that she was gone—gone! He sat staring into space—the space where she had been—and for the first time in his fight the weakness of self-pity overwhelmed him.

"God!" he said, speaking not aloud but within his own mind, and calling, instinctively, on a God not distantly enthroned but there—close—in his soul—now above, now below (or so it seemed!)

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the demon that was in him also—"God! What a man might be—with a woman like that!" Then, as self-pity mastered him: "It isn't fair!" he cried; "it isn't fair! Why send her here if she couldn't stay?"

Then, if there are any Furies that conspire against men's souls, they must have laughed; for they know that when a man grows sorry for himself his spiritual defences are down and he is at the mercy of his peace's enemy.

"Perkins," said the Governor late that afternoon, "I want you to do something for me."

This was an unusual way of prefacing a direction about work, and Perkins—being wise in the ways of confidential service—was prepared for a special requisition upon his fidelity and his secretiveness.

"Yes, sir!" he answered, in a tone which he hoped would indicate that he was ready for anything.

"That was a very remarkable woman who called here this morning—that Mrs. Bardeen," the Governor went on. "It is a great regret to me—a very great regret—that she could not continue with the work. She would have been a big help to me."

"I'm sorry, sir; I thought so, too," said Perkins—and waited.

The Woman Who Helped

"Do you know anything about her?"

"Not a thing, sir; but I can find out." Perkins was an assiduous reader of the memoirs of Constant, Napoleon's valet, and he flattered himself that he knew a thing or two about the ways of the exalted.

"How?"

"Well, I can ask, sir."

"Ask what? Ask whom?"

"Ask around, sir. Somebody's sure to know what you want to find out."

"And do you think you know what I want to find out?"

"I think I do, sir," said Perkins, with a conscious air.

The Governor became suddenly aware of what was in Perkins's mind, and it enraged him.

"I think you do NOT!" he thundered.

Perkins, self-convicted, stammered an apology.

"Mrs. Bardeen," said the Governor, when he had accepted the apology, "is a lady—every inch a lady—one of the finest it has ever been my good fortune to meet. She told me—very briefly—of their straits——"

"Yes, sir; she told me, the day she came—yesterday."

"—and why she was obliged to decline the work we offered her."

"Yes, sir."

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"It seems a great pity that when she needs the work, and the work needs her, she cannot be allowed to do it."

"It does, indeed, sir."

"What I thought you could, perhaps, find out, was something about Mr. Bardeen—how strong his antagonism is—whether there is any way it might be overcome——"

"Yes, sir."

"But be very careful how you go about it. It is a delicate undertaking. Mrs. Bardeen would not wish to have his pride hurt by letting people know that she was seeking employment—least of all from me, if his opposition to me is well known."

"Of course not, sir."

"I didn't think at the time—when she was here—to ask her if she thought there was anything that might be done to make her husband reconsider. It occurs to me that I hardly even expressed my regret. I was—preoccupied. Perhaps if I were to send her a note——"

"Yes, sir. Would you wish to dictate it, sir?"

"No, certainly not. That is, I suppose a personal note would express my regret much more delicately."

"I dare say, sir. Would you like me to deliver it?"

"Yes—and without embarrassment to the lady—I mean, if her husband should be at home—a

The Woman Who Helped

messenger from the Governor's Mansion—you understand——?”

“I understand, sir.”

After the note was despatched, Lyman Innes found himself possessed by a restlessness about which it was difficult to deceive himself. Unable to concentrate his mind upon anything else than the probable outcome of that note, he abandoned, presently, all effort to do otherwise, and spent an hour—two hours—of the stifling July night pacing up and down the library of the Mansion, that gaunt, shabby-genteel old place he had chosen to call his tent while he was on duty.

As he paced, he was noting—half-consciously—the things Julia so bitterly disapproved. Then he found himself wondering if She would care! Suppose she sat there, now, in that chair by the table, beneath the drop-light! Would it matter to her that the furniture was unfashionably antiquated? Over the fine old mantel of white marble, which was an eyesore to Julia because the moment's fancy was for mantels of wood, hung a noble portrait which—so very strong was the tradition about it—was never removed from this place. It was a portrait of the War Governor—the man who had presided over the destinies of this State during the cruel years of the nation's Civil War. He had been a great governor, mag-

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nificantly steadfast throughout times that tried men's souls. His memory was a precious heritage to the sons of his State. How often—Lyman Innes reminded himself to-night as he looked up at the grave, benignant face—that other governor must have paced in vigil up and down this same old room battling for strength to withstand all that beset him. The memory of his trials, nobly borne, dignified the place—yes, exalted it! It was a splendid opportunity that he, Lyman Innes, had; if he proved worthy, how might not his brave fight, remembered, strengthen the sorely tried courage of others coming after him! . . . Somehow, he felt that She would not notice the upholstery; that the portrait, and the memories, would thrill her, too.

The clock in the Capitol—two squares away—struck ten. No word would come from her after this hour. He turned toward the door, to go upstairs; and as he did so, he lifted his bent head suddenly, and found himself looking into the laughing eyes of that ancestral Cavalier. Mocking eyes they were, he reflected, as he climbed the dimly lighted stairs. . . . "Wonder what the War Governor would think of him, for company? . . . And yet! though they laughed and mocked, they were brave—those gay gentlemen who loved, and fought, and drank, and sang—those satin-clad Cavaliers—they could die nobly, too. . . ."

The Woman Who Helped

Thus ran his drowsing thoughts. And when he was fallen asleep, he dreamed of a lady—a Cavalier's lady she was; quite splendid—like a Van Dyck portrait—but one looked quickly past all that, to the ravishing loveliness of her white, white throat.

CHAPTER III

OLIVIA

OLIVIA BARDEEN dried the last of her supper dishes and put them away; scrubbed her wooden dish-drain, scalded her dish-rag and towels and hung them up to air, rinsed her sink in the hot suds, wiped her dish-pan dry and put it on its nail beside the sink.

All these things she did mechanically, as by force of long habit. In the same way, she wound the kitchen clock, put out the tickets and the covered pail for milk—she was not taking cream now—and securely locked the back door against any possible, but not probable, burglar who might select so unpromising a place to rob.

She still wore the gingham dress she had worn in the morning when she called on the Governor; only it was fresh then, and now it was wilted by the kitchen's steaming heat. Her brown hair—of an almost baby fineness and not very abundant—was damp with perspiration, and she pushed it back weariedly from her hot forehead. She wore her hair very simply, pinned in a small knot at the nape of her white neck. But it was

Olivia

the kind of hair that moisture curls, and there were little ringlets in it to-night—as if Nature were determinedly keeping up her charms, in spite of Olivia's busyness and neglect of them.

In the dining-room, a little girl of nine was brushing the crumbs and setting things to rights.

"There, honey-lamb; thank you! that will do," her mother said, taking the big broom away from her. "You go out and play a little while before bedtime. It's so hot to-night I'm afraid the chances for sleeping are not very good."

The child was glad to obey.

"Where's your father?" Olivia asked.

"I think he went downtown," little Constance answered.

When the child was gone to her play—the street was full of children, for all of whom, no doubt, bedtime would be considerably deferred on account of the humid heat—Olivia sat down in the sitting-room, which was dark. It was too hot to have a light; and besides, she hoped that the dark and quiet would keep the neighbors from "running in."

She was in no mood for trivial conversation, and this solitude was grateful to her.

Presently, Constance came in, calling her. "Mamma!" she cried. "Mamma! Where are you?"

Olivia answered.

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"Here's a man to see you."

Olivia jumped to her feet, her heart beating wildly. "It could not—!" And then, ashamed of herself for the mad thought, and for what it revealed to her of where her mind had been straying persistently, she fought down her agitation and went to the door. In the light of the street lamp she recognized the young man who was the Governor's private secretary.

"Mrs. Bardeen?" he asked; in the darkness he could see only that it was a woman at the door.

"Yes. Won't you come in? Or perhaps it will be pleasanter out here on the porch." She was trying to speak casually, but felt that in her intense effort to be steady she was overdoing it.

"Thank you, I'll sit here. I can only stop a moment," he said.

Constance lingered, curious. "Go and play, Constance!" her mother ordered her, with an unaccustomed sharpness that surprised the child and made the mother blush for herself; the first realizations of deceit are so scorching to the sensitive soul.

When the child was gone, Perkins turned to Olivia. "Mr. Bardeen, your daughter tells me, is not at home?"

This, too, hurt—for Olivia understood. "No," she answered, in a low tone.

Olivia

"I—you will, perhaps, be surprised. But the Governor wanted me to bring you a note. He was anxious that you should not be put to any—er—embarrassment by a note from the Governor's Mansion when Mr. Bardeen was present—knowing how Mr. Bardeen feels about the strike situation. I was instructed to be very careful."

Mr. Perkins paused; but Olivia made no sound. Her hands were tightly locked in her lap, and she was biting her under-lip quite cruelly to keep her self-control.

"I asked some children," Perkins went on, anxious to tell in full his fine discreteness, "where Mr. Charles Bardeen lived. And they cried, 'Constance! somebody wants your house.' I was careful"—Olivia felt that she could kill him, he took her interest in his slimy methods so entirely for granted—"to ask her for her father, and for you only when she said he had gone downtown."

"Thank you," Olivia managed to say. "I am sorry if I led the Governor to such an extreme estimate of Mr. Bardeen's antagonism."

Perkins was not sure how she meant this, so he made no reply. "Any answer there may be to this," he said, handing her the note, "will reach the Governor promptly—and safely—if you send it through the mail, addressed to me—Mr. Clarence F. Perkins—and put L. I. on the lower left-hand corner."

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Again Olivia felt that passionate rage. But again she merely said "Thank you." And a moment later Perkins was gone.

She had a momentary impulse to tear the Governor's note into pieces without deigning to read it. How dared he? What sort of a woman did he think she was, to send that slimy creature to her in this insinuating fashion?

Then she checked these resentful feelings, with a laugh that she hoped was born out of her "good common-sense." "Heroics, Olivia!" she reminded herself, teasingly. "The Governor probably wants to ask you some ordinary sort of question about the letters you read, and remembering what you said about your husband, was considerate enough—as that creature said—to put you to no embarrassment about it."

She tried to feel very matter-of-fact as she carried the note indoors and lit the gas so she could read it. But her fingers shook—there was no gainsaying that—and there was something in her throat that hurt, and would not down. She dreaded to look. Suppose she had misread him! Or, suppose he had misread her! Olivia felt she could not bear it if there was anything in the note that hurt. "Not that *I* am so much better than other women who have been—hurt," she told herself; "but because I *want to believe!* I don't want to hate the world!"

Olivia

Then, resolutely—having convinced herself that if the note had in it anything unwelcome she was not to blame, having invited nothing of the sort—she broke the seal and read.

The note was on letter-paper of the Executive Mansion; but it was sealed in a plain envelope. It read:

MY DEAR MRS. BARDEEN:

I wonder if I half-sufficiently expressed to you this morning my very great regret that you find it impossible to go on with the work which you are, I am sure, so pre-eminently fitted to do? I don't remember that I even asked you if there was the slightest chance of your reconsidering. Is there? Pardon me if I seem insistent. But you were good enough to express belief in my earnestness; and it is going to be a great disappointment to me if I see the cause of justice in this sad affair deprived of the service I feel so sure you could render it.

With the profoundest respect,

I am, yours very truly,

LYMAN INNES.

And when Olivia had read it—once, swiftly, to snatch its meaning; and once again, slowly, to see if in her first haste she had passed any hidden purport by—her relief was so great that she burst into tears. Sinking to the floor beside the living-room couch, she buried her head among its cushions and sobbed herself, as a child often does, into quiet and comfort.

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Olivia Bardeen had had a life of struggle. Her people were gentle, but improvident. Her father had been a professor in a small "fresh-water" college. He was thirty years old before he had studied enough—at home and abroad, all on borrowed capital—to get a position where he could earn fifteen hundred dollars a year. He was past forty when he had got his debts paid. And by that time he had six children, of whom Olivia was the eldest. When Olivia was ten years old, her mother was still making over for herself and for Olivia the clothes that had been in her modest trousseau; she had never had a new dress since she was married. And yet, as a professor's wife, she had sometimes to appear at functions in the little town, and quite often to entertain visiting notables in her home. She had been a wonderful woman—that mother! Olivia had recollections of her papering the bedrooms—it was the utmost they could compass, once when their shabbiness got beyond all gentility, to have the parlor and dining-room "regularly" papered by a man from the paint store; any renovating that was done elsewhere had to be much more cheaply compassed—and, because running up and down ladders was so hard to do with skirts on, her mother donned a pair of overalls which the Professor wore when he cleaned out the furnace. She could do this, too—that truly wonderful mother!—without

Olivia

sacrifice of dignity in her children's eyes. Later—when they had ceased to be children—it only lent her the great dignity of resourcefulness, of course. But even at the time, it did not make her in the least ridiculous. They were used to such strange shifts to get along—those children—that they had learned to overlook the means, often grotesque, by which they must always reach any desired end. And Olivia had other recollections of her mother—perhaps on that very day whereon she “papered”; for donning overalls to hang wall-paper was but one of a score of like things which might characterize any of this woman's days—recollections of her as she sat at the head of her plain board and dispensed her scant fare with such wealth of welcome and such sauce of piquant conversation that guests went away with no idea of what they had eaten, only of how glad they were to have been there.

The Professor became paralyzed when he was fifty—the result, his doctors said, of the privations he had undergone in his long student years; innutrition for the young, growing body and over-taxation of the young, growing mind bring their inevitable penalty when there should be full-powered prime. Then the struggle which had always seemed to tax every particle of their powers became a hundred-fold more bitter; and

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yet they found that somehow they were equal to it—for they lived on.

When Charlie Bardeen fell in love with Olivia, he was so enraged at the way she had to work and the sacrifices she had always to be making that he seemed quite in danger of going out of his mind. Olivia's young heart was often bitter, and it was Charlie's impassioned resentment of her lot that won her—probably. He had gone to college where her father taught, and their mild little romance had begun in Charlie's junior year. There was nothing to fan it, ever, beyond the mild stage, until Charlie—under the influence of some momentarily favorite author, no doubt—produced this fine frenzy of protectiveness. It was consoling—in a college senior—but not vastly promising.

But Charlie got a private-secretaryship the second year after he graduated, and at a salary exactly as good as the Professor was able to earn when he had six degrees, including one from Heidelberg. He wanted Olivia to marry him at once "and get out of all that mess of things." This staggered Olivia—a little, but not so much as it should have done. She was shocked at Charlie's irresponsibility, but she allowed herself to excuse it on the ground of his youth and of his eagerness. For eagerness is appealing to the girl-heart, especially to the girl who has known so much struggle

Olivia

and renunciation. And Olivia didn't know how to question a man's eagerness; how to test it for selfishness, and to be afraid.

She refused, firmly and finally, to slip out and leave her share of the burden on her mother's shoulders. When Charlie realized that she was immovable about this, he said, "Well, then, let us get married and live with them. I'll pay your way, and mine, and that'll surely help some. Things'll be easier then than they are now."

"But they'll have to move to the city," she reminded him.

"Of course. But that's where the boys'll have to be, anyway, if they're going to work."

So they were married. . . . Olivia was perfectly fair about it. She admitted to herself, and to Charlie, that it was more than should have been expected of any young man—shouldering the cares of such a household at the outset of his business life. For, of course, that was what it amounted to.

She couldn't blame him when, after two years, he insisted on a home of his own. He was tired of the air of anxiety; tired of the atmosphere of illness; tired of having his young wife always so tied down with cares that, as he said, he hardly saw more of her than if he were a mere boarder in the house. Tireddest of all was he of living so close to a hundred needs, all of them urgent, that

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it was impossible to keep within one's "board" limit, putting the rest in bank or into simple indulgences, without feeling like a selfish brute. So they moved. It broke Olivia's heart, but she offered no resistance, for by this time she was able to look her married situation clearly in the face and estimate its further prospects. They were not blissful prospects, but she did not feel that that altered her duty in any way. Charlie was not to blame, she felt; he was essentially the same Charlie she had always known, only she had not always known how to estimate him. There was nothing glaringly wrong about him; Olivia could have got on with him much better if there had been some big fault, some pathetic weakness. He was just selfish—that was all—just ordinarily and quite understandably, but hopelessly, selfish. He wanted to live comfortably and to get along creditably. So long as he was neither resisted nor entreated, he was a sufficiently amiable man to live with. He worked steadily; he paid his household bills; he never drank. But when Constance was in her dreaded "second summer," ailing and fretful all the time, and Olivia was nursing and tending her, and doing her own housework, and going over to her mother's every day to try to lend a helping hand in the sickroom where her father lay gasping his life away in the torrid heat, Charlie seemed un-

Olivia

conscious of the burden she was bearing. He never raged against the toilsomeness of her lot. Olivia noted this, grimly. But she made no complaint; there was nothing to be hoped for in complaining to Charlie. He was the sort of man who never took spiritual stock of himself, either on his own initiative or on another's urging; nothing was further from his thoughts than whether he was a better or a worse, a meaner or a finer, man to-day than yesterday. He lived in the present—so much so that he had not even an acute dissatisfaction with being, at thirty-seven, a private secretary, just as he had been at twenty-four.

Olivia was determined that for Constance's sake she would never lose her spirit. It was the efforts her mother-love prompted her to, and the sweetness of it swelling in her heart, that made a late springtime burgeon in her soul. She had been feeling, this last year or two, little evidences of the tribute the world pays, in passing, to attractiveness. Now and then some one who had known her long would say: "Olivia is growing pretty." Now and then some one who met her, or saw her, for the first time, would show—as Lyman Innes had unwittingly shown that morning—an instant admiration. Olivia was waking up to a new phase of life. She had felt a fluttering consciousness of it momentarily before to-day. But to-day the consciousness had stayed with her;

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had dominated all her thoughts; had refused to be driven out of her mind.

When she returned from the Capitol to go about her ordinary task of getting dinner, her heart was hot with rebelliousness. It was true, as the Governor had said, she could have been a help! And what a difference it would have made to her—feeling that she was playing a part in a big issue; associating daily, even if for only a few minutes, with a man like the Governor; earning, too, some money to relieve the pinch of their circumstances! But no! Charlie wouldn't have it; she might bring him into some disrepute with his employer, the bitterest of all those who denounced the Governor for refusing to call out the State troops. . . .

She got up, when she had eased her heart with crying, and went into the kitchen to bathe her hot, tear-stained face. She looked at the kitchen clock. It was not nine o'clock—too soon to call Constance in and make her go to bed in her low-ceiled, stuffy little room. She would read awhile. But the book she had found interesting night before last palled on her unendurably this evening. Last evening she had had the letters. How fascinating they were—all those various points of view! And what a fool she had been to try to tell Charlie about them, and about her new undertaking, when he came up at eleven o'clock from

Olivia

his loitering downtown! She could have read the letters and made her reports, and Charlie need never have been any the wiser!

With sudden determination, she closed her book, went over to the little oak writing-desk, and wrote a note. Disregarding all forms, she began:

I am deeply honored with the confidence you express in my ability to be of service. I want to help. I cannot be satisfied not to help. And, as I told you, I need to do something. This seems such a Heaven-sent opportunity that I am going to grasp it. No embarrassment to Mr. Bardeen can ensue if he knows nothing of my reconsidering. As no harm to any one can possibly be involved, and we hope that, on the contrary, good may come, I am persuaded that there can be nothing wrong in a little subterfuge. These times are times of war—industrial war—and I am aware that ingenuousness has not always been the best servant of warfare. I will call at the Executive Offices to-morrow morning about eleven.

This she sealed, addressed to Mr. Clarence F. Perkins, wrote L. I. in the lower left-hand corner, and carried out to the mail-box.

Then she called Constance in, and beguiled her reluctant going to bed with such pretty playfulness that Constance was enchanted.

"You act lovely and *glad*," said the child gratefully, as her mother kissed her good-night.

CHAPTER IV

“NOR EVER ANY MORE”

THE summer dragged its torrid length along. Starving, but stubborn, the strikers held out. Sullen in their rage, the employers refused compromise. And the public clamored unceasingly. Of all the clamor that got into print, or into general circulation in the strata that print influenced, not much was favorable to the starving men. Lyman Innes might well have felt the whole world against him had it not been for those letters that kept pouring in. Many of them were abusive, too; but there were others that made his courage unflinching. That part of the world in sympathy with the strikers soon got to know where his interest lay, and it poured its gratefulness in upon him as openly as, for his sake, it dared. The other part, meanwhile, expressed a contempt or hate for him according to the degree in which its convenience or its profit was involved.

The times that were hardest for him were those when here and there in the State sundry men among the strikers, less self-disciplined than the

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rest, let their passions fly to deeds of violence. A broken window in a strike neighborhood, or a head broken in such a saloon row as passed unnoticed at other times, and the clamor for the troops became frenzied. Grimly, then, Lyman Innes was wont to turn to the records of sack and pillage and arson and rape among the armies of the Union fighting for an undivided country in which no man should be a slave. The generals who led those armies acknowledged—some of them indifferently, some sadly and in shame—their inability to curb these brutal passions in their victorious fighting-men. How much less, then, Lyman Innes urged, could be expected of an army of men who were not winning, and whose wives and children were crying for bread. He considered the self-restraint of the strikers marvellous, on the whole, and he longed with all his heart to tell them so. But every expression that went out from the Executive Offices had to be guarded in the extreme—not for the sake of Lyman Innes’s political future, but for the sake of present peace. Impeachment lay in wait for him, he knew—holding off only for evidence. A single ill-advised utterance, and he might be put where no steadfast resistance of his would keep State troops from offering armed threats to men whose cause was just. And failure to realize this made some who should have held him most grate-

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fully in their hearts speak bitterly of him, as of one who would not dare.

At length, appeal was made to Federal power; the President was besought to take the situation in hand and to send United States troops and establish martial law. Delaying answer to this demand, the President sent for Governor Innes.

The hurried trip to Washington was made quietly. It was given out, at the Capital, that the Governor had gone to spend a week-end with his family. Instead, he remained a little longer on the train and went to the summer Capital of the nation which, in that administration, was not far from Washington.

The Governor had been back at his desk but an hour or two, on Monday morning, when Perkins opened the door of his own private office for Olivia. With the briefest possible acknowledgment to him, Olivia sat down (as her wont was) at his desk, and Perkins withdrew. He could not help knowing that Olivia disliked him, and as he could not see the slightest reason why she should, he, naturally, disliked her in turn.

She was—as far as those few of the office force who ever saw her were concerned—a woman who did some clerical work at home to help Mr. Perkins through the unusual mass of correspondence. She came mornings about ten o'clock, and worked for a while, getting her stuff together, in

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Mr. Perkins's office while he was busy in the Governor's private room, with orders not to be disturbed. Her name was not on the pay-rolls. Presumably, Mr. Perkins himself paid for her assistance. No one Olivia encountered in her comings and goings seemed to give the slightest curious heed to her. It was only Perkins—because of what she knew that he knew—whom she hated; yes, and because of what she knew he thought of her that she did not deserve. His inability to comprehend what she had no right to expect that he could comprehend, enraged her.

When he was gone this morning, she took off her hat and ran her fingers through her damp hair to break up the little ringlets that formed in it when she was overheated. Then she went to the window-embasure and stood there, listening for a hand upon the inner door, her heart beating nervously.

The instant that door opened and she saw his face, she should know how his plea to the President had been received. She felt that she could not bear it if he had lost. And yet, if he had lost, she must not only bear it, but she must help him to bear it, too. She was nerving herself to what she felt might be the ordeal of her life, when the door opened and he was there.

Olivia swayed slightly and clutched at a heavy curtain. In an instant he was beside her.

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"Why, Pardner!" he said—it was his own name for her.

"I'm ashamed of 'Pardner,'" she answered, trying to laugh but unable to conceal the little, hysterical note in her voice. "But oh! I was *so* afraid!"

She knew then, without asking, that her fears had been—not groundless, by any means, but unnecessary; it was the sharp reaction of her relief that made her lose her poise.

"I was *so* afraid!" she repeated. "It has seemed *weeks* since you went—I have been so anxious."

"I would have wired you," he said, "but I did not dare."

"Of course not." She said nothing to him of what it had been to her, those three days, to conceal the anxiousness and go ordinarily about her duties; for, not by art but by instinct, she kept from him, as much as she could, the stress she was constantly under that she might be his "Pardner."

He held open for her the door into his own private office, and they went in. It was their hour. There was a chair she always sat in; when she was gone, he laid an ever-ready armful of Official Records on it so that no one else could sit there till she came again. He picked up the fat, black volumes now, and she smiled; for he had told her.

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“Well?” she said, looking up at him. “Tell me every word of it that you can.”

So he told her—now pacing up and down as he talked, now standing for a minute at a time and looking down into her eager face—about his interview with the President.

“It was really your interview, Pardner,” he began. “Things were all against me at the outset. When I pleaded the earnestness of the striking men, the President came back at me with the recital of what he called their lawlessness. It was then I got out your data—the selected letters—the facts and figures you worked so hard to bring together. The President was tremendously impressed. He is a big man, and I am sure he wants to be fair—fair to everybody, but if a little more fair to one than to another, then to the man with most against him. He isn’t a sentimentalist in any sense; he is not appealed to by the under dog because he *is* under, but only if he is unfairly bested—if his cause is just. I have almost never talked with a man who impressed me as having so unimpassioned a love of justice. Lincoln, you know”—he smiled at her—“*our* Lincoln, was not unimpassioned—perhaps the biggest men never are. But unless you can have a ruler whose splendid passions run to righteousness as under Divine guidance, I reckon the next best kind is one who has an all-compelling love for right in

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the abstract. This President of ours is a kind of Solomon in judgment. And you feel that he would make, on the same grounds, the same decision whether all or none of his own interests were at stake."

There was so much to tell her, and the time was so short—imperatively shorter this morning than usual, because of the number of persons who must be seen in conferences. He talked rapidly, seldom taking his eyes from her face with its radiance of eager interest. But he felt that he had hardly begun, when the time of his first appointment was at hand.

"I'll save comment on these," she said, indicating the letters and newspaper clippings she had selected for him to read, "until to-morrow. There's nothing that cannot wait."

"And this evening?" he asked, as he held open for her the door into Perkins's room.

"As always," she answered, "I do not know. But I'll try."

When they could, they stole an hour in the evening, sometimes. There was a small park not many squares away either from the Governor's Mansion or from the little, slate-colored, two-story cottage where Olivia had her home. When Charlie was downtown—as he nearly always was—and Constance was playing about in the neighborhood, Olivia could sometimes manage to slip

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down there for a little while after the supper dishes were done and before it was time to see that Constance got to bed. She never could be sure that she could get away. But almost always he managed to be there waiting for her, on a retired bench, like a grocery-boy swain awaiting his servant-maid sweetheart.

Only once—both of them trembling every minute with realization of the risk they were running—had he been to her home for just long enough to satisfy himself with a glimpse of the background against which she lived the other hours, and to gratify her with the memory of his presence there. And once—shaking guiltily with the same sense of risk—he had been able to stand with her for a few brief moments beneath the War Governor's portrait; to see her sit, for a fraction of relentlessly hurrying time, in the chair by the table, where the lamplight shone on her soft white throat.

For the rest, their snatches of companionship were taken in the little park where it rather grimly amused him that the head of the State should have to go, along with those others who, for one reason or another, had no place else to meet the objects of their affections.

That evening he waited in vain for her to come. When the Capitol clock pealed out nine strokes, he knew that he need no longer expect her; and, driven by a disappointment so keen that it ought

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to have alarmed him, he walked across the park, away from the Governor's Mansion and in the direction of the Bardeen cottage.

There were lights burning downstairs and in more than one room above. He knew this was not ordinary, for he had many times passed this way about this time, after an unrewarded waiting. Olivia was frugal of gas, he knew.

Immediately, the sick fear seized him that she was ill. Why he jumped to the conclusion of her illness—not Charlie's, nor Constance's—he could not explain to himself; but we are always most fearful for what we hold most precious, as if we still believed in fates or furies who keep watch to steal our treasure, not because they want it, but because we love it so.

Lurking in shadows that would hide him from recognition, Lyman Innes hung about the cottage for what seemed to him an eternity of time, watching for her shadow to pass across a lighted, opaque shade, or for some one to enter or leave the house who might give him a clew to what was happening there. But the lights burned on; no shadow reassured him; and no one came or went. Finally, in an agony of apprehension, he went home.

That night Lyman Innes spent in vigil. Part of the time he was two men, as separate as the War Governor and the Cavalier; and one of the

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two argued mightily with the other. Then, again, there was but one man present, and he looked up at the laughing Cavalier as at one who could understand.

Pacing up and down past the chair where She had sat—once in reality, but so often, in his fancy—it was some time before his preoccupied gaze fell on a letter on the library table. It was from Julia; and he remembered, with a guilty start, that it had been there this morning when he came from the train. Even now, he found his strong impulse was not to open it—he dreaded the reiteration of Julia’s reproaches—but to put it in his pocket so that the servants might not see it lying there unopened.

And yet in a week Julia herself would be back; would be sitting, doubtless, in that very chair Olivia had sat in. He had not been disloyal to Julia in deed—only in thought. But Julia, who believed firmly in the natural depravity of all men and some women, would never, if any inkling of the affair got to her ears, credit him, or Olivia, with less than the blackest infamy.

It might never get to Julia’s ears? Possibly not. And yet, once the strike was settled, or public interest in it died down, there would be no excuse for Olivia’s services at the Capitol; and how else—once life took on its normal routine again—could he hope to see her?

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“Look at you to-night!” one of the two men he was reminded him. “See the agony of apprehensiveness you are in because she did not keep a silly little rendezvous in a public park. Can you go on this way? All fall and winter long, are you going to let yourself go into a frenzy every time you want to see her and can’t compass it? Can you govern a great State and be governed by a weakness like that? I’ll grant you that she’s sweet and gentle and good, and has been a great help and comfort to you. And I’ll grant you that you don’t have much happiness in Julia. But what is there for you to do? Julia is there, and likely to stay. You couldn’t put her away from you—in the quaint Bible phrase—and, for the children’s sake, you know that you wouldn’t if you could. What then? A continued clandestineness? You know the hideous unwholesomeness of that! Will you make yourself a slave to secrecy and fear? This is a good time to reckon with yourself, and to look the probable future frankly in the face.”

“But what of her?” urged the other pleader. “Will you withdraw yourself out of her poor little life at the moment your peace of mind demands? You have made yourself a factor in her hungry days. When you disregard your own heart’s emptiness, can you disregard her heart’s emptiness, too?”

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Back and forth, back and forth swung the argument. As soon as it seemed established that there was nothing in reason to do but to try to forget, up would come a great surge of mixed tenderness and egotism, and he would cry out that he could not desert her. It was well on toward morning when he left the library to go upstairs; and the pendulum in his mind was still swinging. But it was something that when he passed the Cavalier he did not look up into the mocking eyes.

In the morning, with a day full of grave business before him, Lyman Innes found that the uppermost, ever-present question in his mind was: Will she come?

She did not come. Instead, Perkins brought him in a letter addressed to Clarence F. Perkins—Personal.

“Evidently for you, sir,” said Perkins, indicating the L. I. in the corner—and withdrawing discreetly without suggesting that he knew the authorship.

Lyman Innes’s first thought was one of relief—at least she was not ill, not very ill, or she could not have written. Then, although he believed he had decided what he must do, he was conscious—as he broke the seal—of a fear which made him sick at heart. Suppose she wrote to say she could never come again!

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Her note had no formal address.

"Some time," she said, "I will explain to you—I *hope!* Just now it must be enough to say I cannot come—to-day, nor ever any more. I comfort myself with believing that you *know what this means to me!* The work I have I will get back to you very soon—at the first opportunity."

It had come! He sat as one stunned, staring stupidly at the chair piled with Official Records. "Nor ever any more!" . . . All morning, as he went about his difficult work, that phrase lay on his heart like a weight of doom: "Nor ever any more!"

Olivia was through her work early on Monday evening. Charlie did not come home to supper, so she saved for next day the meat she had bought principally on his account; and it was a quick and easy matter clearing up after the little bite she and Constance ate. He might come late, though; anything like a regular appearance at meal times—even now, when he was unemployed—was not among the courtesies he conceded to Olivia. So she sat down on her back door-step to wait; the front of the house was no place to appear if one did not wish to invite calls from the neighbors, all of whom spent the warm evenings in visiting from porch to porch.

A little gust of breeze slammed the kitchen

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door shut behind her. Absorbed in her reveries, and cut off by the closing of the door, she did not hear Charlie come in. He called her. No answer. Hating, man-like, the dark, silent house, he lit the gas in the parlor, then in the dining-room. He looked into the shadowy kitchen. She was not there. He went upstairs, lighting the gas in her room, in Constance's, in his own. Not finding her, he came down again, leaving the lights burning.

When the Capitol clock struck eight, she got up to go, thinking he would not come now. The kitchen door was self-locking, so she went around the side of the house to close the front door—the only precaution that was ever necessary when she left the place for this brief hour while the street was full of neighbors, watching and gossiping, and of children at play.

As she went up the porch steps, she met him, coming out the front door.

“Where have you been?” he demanded, accusingly.

“Sitting on the back steps—waiting for you,” she answered, “and the kitchen door blew shut.”

“It's a lie!” he shouted.

Olivia looked over her shoulder to see if any one's attention had been attracted by his loud tones. Ignoring his insult, she begged pacifically:

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"Come in-doors, Charlie, and let me get your supper."

"I don't want any supper. I want to know where you've been."

"I told you where I have been."

"And I told you it was a lie—a damned lie!"

"If you will come into the house, and talk quietly—if you can't talk respectfully—I'll discuss it with you; but not out here."

Sullenly he followed her in. She went to the windows and closed them. He knew what she meant: "In case you forget yourself." When she made a move to turn out the gas in the dining-room, he stopped her.

"Let it burn," he said. "I want light on a good many things—lots of light!"

His voice was hoarse, and he had about him a kind of ugliness Olivia had never seen in him before; he was often sulky, but this was different—this was rage, blind, passionate rage. As well try to argue with a madman, she knew.

Not knowing how to begin to pacify him, she waited for him. It was useless to offer defense until she knew what his charge was. It would be useless in any case, she reflected—before or after accusation—but doubly useless before. So she waited.

"Well," he said, "have you got anything to say?"

"About what?"

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“Don’t shift!” he cried menacingly.

“About where I was after I washed my supper dishes?”

“About where you have been spending most of your time lately.”

“I don’t know what you mean. I have spent most of my time lately, as always, at home doing my housework.”

“You have NOT!” he thundered.

“Is there any use talking to you at all?” she asked icily.

“Not much! I’m small fry, after a Governor, I know. But you’re married to me—and I’ve got an accounting due. I mean to get it, too. So, begin!”

His manner filled her with rage. His look, his tone, accused her of the vilest crimes. Already, in his heart, her guilt was proved. He ordered her to plead, only that he might have the monstrous satisfaction of telling her her plea was vain.

She would not plead! She turned from him and walked swiftly toward the stairs.

“Where are you going?” he demanded.

“To my room—anywhere—to shut myself away from insult,” she answered.

He seized her roughly and shook her with insensate violence.

“To your room!” he shouted, “but *not* anywhere else! I’ll fool him for *once*—and forever!”

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She thought she read murder in his eyes, and with a mighty effort she wrenched herself free and fled up the stairs. When he reached her door she had it locked.

He tried the door, then laughed. "That's a flimsy protection for you," he called, "but I guess it'll do for me. Throw me the key over the transom."

There was no reply.

"Throw me the key," he repeated, "or I'll crash in the door." He thrust his weight against the door, and it creaked ominously. She drew the key out of the lock and flung it to him; anything for a brief respite from the sight and sound of him. He fumbled for it in the half-lighted hall; and a moment later she heard him going heavily downstairs.

When the sound of his footsteps had died away, Olivia turned out the gas that was burning in her room and threw herself on her bed. She was too infuriated to cry—too full of rage even to think. She could only lie there and feel the hot surges rise in her, and pass—burning—over her to her very finger-tips where they oozed out impotently.

His hand, clutching the key, in his pocket, Charlie Bardeen walked out of his house and across the little park—three squares away—to

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the Executive Mansion, where he rang the bell imperatively and asked for the Governor.

“The Governor is not at home,” the butler said. “Any name or message, sir?”

Charlie Bardeen hesitated. Then, “No,” he answered; “I’ll call again.”

He recrossed the park—where the Governor sat, waiting—and went back to his own street. He had no intention of going into his house—that seemed impossible to him—but he wanted to see if anything had happened.

Noting that the light was out in Olivia’s room, he was filled with a horrid suspicion. Not even the key he clutched stilled his questioning. There might be another key! He entered and stole silently up the stairs. At the door, he listened. There was no sound. He tried the knob; the lock was fast. Withdrawing the key from his pocket, he opened the door and strode in. Olivia sat up on her bed—fear swallowed up in anger—and confronted him as he lighted the gas. Neither of them spoke. His glance about the room was full of insult. Then he turned out the light and went out—locking the door after him as ostentatiously as a jailer might have done.

He had been gone but a few minutes when Constance came in. Frightened at the emptiness of the lighted house, Constance called, “Mamma!” The appealing little cry reached into those

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black depths where Olivia lay, hating life with passionate resentment of all—or nearly all—it had dealt her. Ah! but there was something that she cherished! She was on her feet and beside the door in an instant.

“Here, darling!” she called reassuringly.

Constance tried the door. From the other side of it came her mother’s laugh.

“A funny thing has happened!” Olivia told the child. “Mother’s locked in! And she has lost the key.”

It did not occur to Constance to wonder why her mother had locked her door.

“Where’d you lose it?” she asked—meaning the key.

“That’s what I can’t tell,” Olivia answered, so gayly that the child did not suspect her double meaning. “Is your father downstairs?”

“No, ma’am; I don’t know where he is.”

“Well, then, listen, Constance! Mother wants to write a little letter. You wait there a minute and she’ll throw it through the transom to you. Then you run across to the mail-box with it, and come hurrying back.”

When Constance returned her mother said: “Let’s play a lovely game. Pretend I’m a most unhappy queen, and some bad men have shut me up in a dungeon cell, and you are the little princess, my daughter; and in the night, when the

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castle is all still, you come stealing along the dark corridors to find where they have put me. Pretend that transom is the only window in my cell, and you are going to climb through it to sleep with me. Suppose you could?”

“I don’t know,” Constance answered delightedly, “but I could try.”

“Be careful and don’t fall.”

“No’m—I won’t.”

There was the sound of a chair being dragged to the other side of the door. Then, when the utter inadequacy of that became apparent at a glance, there were departing foot-falls, and silence for several minutes. Resourceful Constance had remembered the little three-step ladder her mother used when hanging pictures, washing transoms, and doing like things. Fortunately, it was upstairs, in the back bedroom—over the kitchen—that a girl would have occupied if they had kept one, but which served as a trunk- and store- and sewing-room instead.

Running nimbly up its steps, Constance stood high enough to look easily down at her mother.

Olivia smiled up at her. “Now to get you through!” she said. But that was not difficult, with Olivia standing on a chair to catch her.

Then it occurred to Olivia that they must try to get the ladder inside, too—“lest the jailers see it.” To do it, she had to push her bureau side-

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wise to the door and, standing on that, reach over, grasp the ladder, and drag it through. All of which amused Constance delightfully.

The most unhappy queen and the little princess slept in each other's arms—or, at least, the little princess slept, and the queen lay very still, so as not to disturb her.

“What'll papa think when he comes home?” the princess asked drowsily, as she was drifting off to dreamland.

“Oh, he may not know. He often comes home after we're asleep, you know.”

At dawn Olivia was up and at the window, measuring with her eye the distance to the ground, and computing what she might be able to do with the little ladder toward breaking it. Carefully she let it down; but the part that was the prop would not perform its duty, and the foolish thing that might have helped her collapsed and lay prone upon the ground.

Olivia dressed herself, then waked Constance.

“Get up, little princess,” she said, “and don't make any noise. Let's see if we can't get out of here without waking up father. Think how he'd tease us!”

With the aid of a sheet she easily let the child down into the yard. Then, throwing down her mattress to break her fall in case her own support failed, she gashed a hole in one corner of her stout

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Marseilles spread, put one foot of her bureau—still barricading the door, but not too far from the window—through the hole, and, thus anchored, let herself down into her side yard and freedom.

Even in all her haste and agitation she looked back at the flapping spread, sorry she could not hide the evidence of her escape. But she reflected that a bedspread hanging, even diagonally, out of a bedroom window might not proclaim to the neighbors the shame to which she had been put. She hid the mattress in the shed and carried the step-ladder around to the kitchen door where it would look less unusual. Then, seizing Constance by the hand, she hurried down the back yard and out through the alley gate.

“Why, Mamma! where are we going?” Constance cried in astonishment.

Olivia burst into tears—for the first time in all her trouble. “God knows—I don’t!” she sobbed. And, gripping even tighter the little hand she held, she broke into a speed that was almost a run.

The new day was but faintly dawned yet, and they met no one as they hurried on.

CHAPTER V

THE PRICE THAT WAS PAID

AT twelve-thirty an angry-looking man came out of the Governor's office. He was Charlie Bardeen's employer, and he had been having an explosive interview with his State's chief executive. The denial of that plea for Federal interference had cut off his last hope, and he was beside himself with rage—which he called indignation. He was a man of large political power, and he was infuriated to find that when he most needed that power to serve him it was overruled and set at naught.

"You'll never hold office of any kind in this State again—I can promise you that!" he cried. There are some people whose present impotence never weakens their belief in how strong they are going to be to-morrow; like the sniveling little boys they used to be, they still shake their fists at their retiring victors and cry: "You just wait!"

Lyman Innes's present feeling was that he never wanted to hold office in this or any other State again, but he did not say so to his irate caller. There was another "Never" that filled

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his ears so that—to-day—they were deadened to threats of other loss. "Nor ever any more."

In the hall outside the Governor's office the angry man, departing, fairly bumped into another man who was hovering anxiously about the corridor.

"What the —!" began the angry man. Then he recognized the other. "Ah, Bardeen!" he muttered. "Infernal anarchist!" he jerked out, nodding his head in the direction of the Governor's door.

He had not reached the nearest exit when there was a shot—a second's awful silence—then another shot. He turned back. Men were rushing out of the open doorways along every marble corridor. Ten feet outside the entrance to the Governor's offices, Lyman Innes lay shot through the lungs. Almost across his feet was the body of Bardeen—quite dead, although the sound of his self-destroying shot had scarcely ceased echoing, and the smoke from his revolver still hung, wraith-like, in the heavy air.

As soon as Olivia was able to think at all, she realized that she had very little money and no place to go. Her shabby little purse contained less than four dollars. That was all they had in the world—she and Constance—except the few clothes on their backs. Her first impulse was to

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get out of town, to hide herself where she was not known. But when she reflected how little money she had to take them, and to keep them until she could get work to do, she felt that—for Constance's sake—she must not be rash.

She had a brother in town—she was so thankful, when she thought of her people, that the dear Mother was gone where this that had happened to Olivia could not hurt her—and though he was much younger than she, and probably could not help her much, materially or with counsel, she decided she would better go to him.

He was a struggling young fellow with a new little wife, and a new little baby, and a new little home. Olivia could not ask him for much; but a shelter—until she had time to think—he could at least give her.

“I have had to leave Charlie,” she told him, when she had roused him from his early morning slumber. “Please don't ask me why, or anything about it. Only let me come in for a little while, and if he asks for me tell him I'm not here.”

“Why, of course!” he agreed. But Olivia could feel that both he and the new little wife were unable—however willing—to sympathize at all fully with a woman running away from her husband and taking with her their only child. They were thinking—she as well as he—that if it were Nellie, now, who had taken the baby and gone

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to Charlie Bardeen, they'd hope that when Walter came looking for her, Charlie would bring him in, and call Nellie, and tell them to kiss and make up.

Walter promised to do as Olivia asked. But she felt that he was not incapable of promising with mental reservations about doing what he thought was for her good. So she had an uneasy morning. But it wore away, somehow, and Charlie did not come. At one o'clock Walter came home, white and shaking.

"Charlie Bardeen," he managed to gasp, "has shot the Governor."

Olivia's senses reeled—she swayed—and Walter caught her as she fell.

When she came out of her swoon, she asked: "Is he dead?"

And thinking she meant Charlie, they said: "Yes."

Her eyes closed and they thought she had fainted again. But no merciful unconsciousness came to her. Rather, it was as if her senses—electrified by the shock—refused to spare her a single crucifying memory.

Her first agony was of loss. The world seemed stark to her, with him gone out of it. Then she thought of the sorrow of others—of his children—and of the vengeful rage with which those who loved the dead man would turn upon his de-

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stroyer. What would Charlie say when they questioned him? In one horrible instant her mind grasped the prospect of publicity—of shame. For herself she felt she did not care. But for Constance! And for *him*—whose fair fame would go down in scandal to the grave!

So intense was her agony of suffering that it was hours before Walter dared to ask her what she wanted done about Charlie's body.

"Charlie's body?" she repeated dazedly.

"Yes," he said. "They went to the house to notify you and couldn't find you—of course. There is much mystery about your disappearance. Don't you think I'd better tell——"

"Is Charlie dead?" she asked.

Then they were sure—Walter and the little new wife—that in the shock of her sorrow she had gone quite mad.

"Yes, dear," they said gently, but as if they did not dare hope that they could make her understand, "Charlie is dead. He was crazed, they say, by not having any work—and by the President's refusal to end the strike—and he shot the poor Governor—then killed himself."

Keyed as she was to the prospect of disgrace compared with which death is a kindly Providence, the relief this brought to Olivia was so great that to those who were on-lookers and who could not understand, she seemed more than ever to have

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gone mad—not raving mad, but stricken, as Ophelia was.

“Thank God!” she murmured. “Oh, thank God!”

They gazed at her aghast.

“And the—the Governor?” she managed at last to ask.

“He is not dead. But they say he cannot live.”

At that she turned her face to the wall and did not speak again.

Walter and Nellie—poor, frightened children—taking counsel together, decided what they must do. They would ignore the little quarrel—whatever it was—that had brought Olivia to their house so early in the morning.

“For,” said Nellie, clutching him fearfully, “if it was you and me I couldn’t bear to have it known that our last words were unloving ones and I had left you.”

So they agreed that they would give out word simply that Olivia had been crazed by the shock, and that they would take charge for her of their brother-in-law’s burial.

When Olivia realized their conclusion she had just one impulse: to take advantage of it. This would give her the only possible cover under which to shield from unwitting stabs her soul’s raw agony.

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She let them bury Charlie, and they thought they understood when she said she did not want to look at him.

She heard them talk about the Governor's condition; about the intense feeling the assassination had aroused in the State and throughout the country. Unceasing prayers were made for his recovery—but there was little hope.

Finally, after a lapse of time wherein she had lost count of nights and days, she heard the Capitol bell tolled. It was the signal to the people that he had gone.

There was never such a funeral, people said, except those of the two martyred Presidents.

The papers that had abused him most were fullest of his eulogy. The powers that had opposed him were silent—appeased, perhaps, by the price he had paid. The President, shocked and incensed, gave tribute to Lyman Innes as one of the truest Americans the nation has produced to do it honor. Hundreds of anecdotes got into print and into conversation about his steadfastness in the behalf of liberty, of justice.

As always, the assassin's hand served but to bring out, to people's softened judgment, all that was good in the victim, and to blur their remembrance of all in him that might have been weak or unworthy.

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Thus fell the curtain on the life of Lyman Innes. There was some wild talk of Bardeen's having been hired to remove the Governor; but that soon died. The deed went on record as a madman's deed. And in the shock that followed upon it, certain defenses fell down; peace came at last, and as he would have wished it. In the sorrow his death caused, the strike was won.

Olivia never went back to the gray cottage. Walter and Nellie took charge of it for her, sold out all it contained—except a few of her personal effects, and Constance's—and sent the pittance the sale brought to Olivia in a city where, under another name, she and Constance were trying to face life anew.

PART II

CHAPTER VI

FIFTEEN YEARS LATER

ROSE was smiling whimsically at herself as she stood in the half-lighted hall fumbling in her purse to find her latch-key.

The moment she had let herself into the apartment she heard the clatter of china in the dining-room.

"Oh, I'm late again!" she cried—and went straight in there without waiting even to take off her hat.

Johnny was at the table eating.

"No," he said good-humoredly, "it is only I who am early—as usual. Have to be!"

Davy was sitting in the baywindow reading by the fading daylight.

"It doesn't seem," he said, only half-looking up from his book, "as if this family would ever arrive at the luxury of a dinner hour that everybody can keep."

Johnny winked one black eye wickedly at Rose.

"Do you know," he observed, with mock gravity, "that being a literary editor is like to make our Davy a *snob*? 'Member the hours we used

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to keep when he was a mere reporter on the *Clarion*?"

Davy smiled over his book, but said nothing.

"Well," Rose admitted, "I don't suppose it would be possible to have a dinner hour that would suit me. The only time I ever face dinner hour without protest, I believe, is down South, where they dine sensibly at two or three o'clock. There isn't much else than dine that anybody cares to do at two o'clock. But at half-past five or six, or seven! It's just impossible for me to get home then."

"Cars stuck?" asked Davy.

Rose laughed. "I wasn't on any car," she said. "I was loitering along on Shanks' mare. If there could only be a prize for loitering," she called out from her room adjoining, where she had gone to remove her hat and coat, "there couldn't any messenger boy or Broadway car beat me to it! Country or city, this's the time o' day for it, too. Guess what I saw!" she demanded, re-emerging.

Davy looked up interestedly—Johnny was always eager to be interested.

"What?" they both said. Rose was always coming in with a tale of adventure that they both loved to hear.

"I was coming through Tenth Street, from Sixth Avenue," she began.

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Johnny grinned. "Discharged, or out on bail?" he asked. The Jefferson Market Police Court is at Sixth Avenue and Tenth Street.

"Bail," Rose answered promptly, and went on. "There was a man going up the avenue leading a small, ornery-looking, real live bear. The bear belonged to your profession, Johnny, and he had a sign on inviting people to come and see him to-night at the Royal Theatre for five cents."

"Idea for you, Johnny," Davy murmured.

"Don't like to be led," Johnny objected.

"It's the best thing you do!" Davy remarked.

"There was a beautiful crowd," Rose hastened to interpose. "Women out on supper-buying errands, and young folks on their way home from sweatshops and factories, and a contingent from the court—hangers-on and potential prisoners—and millions of children. That old tribal patriarch who keeps the little clothing store was in his doorway among his flapping bargains, peering intently through his thick glasses; and a dago who was selling cheap oranges from a wagon by the curb flashed his white teeth in delighted grins. I was moving along in the crowd, loving it all, when I happened to look up suddenly—and across the street. On the opposite curb, looking more entirely absorbed than anybody else in the crowd, was a shy little man, almost shabby-looking; if any one had noticed him—which no one

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did—he would have passed for a seedy accountant who had spent his uneventful life hunched over the dreary ledgers of some pelt exporters, or the like. I think he had been going through Tenth Street—to Cecchina's, probably, or to call on some one in the Studio Building—but he forgot it. For when I lost sight of the crowd, going up the avenue, he was engulfed in it——”

“Getting material for a new story,” said Davy, who had easily guessed the little man's identity.

“No,” corrected Rose, “I don't think he was—not consciously, I mean. He was just following the bear, and the crowd, because it appealed to the eternal boy-heart in him. He couldn't write the things he does if he went about looking for ‘copy.’ Do you think he could? He loves life—for its own sake—quite instinctively—and it expresses itself through him—or so it seems to me.”

“He's a wonder—that man!” pronounced Johnny.

Rose nodded. “I know—it made me feel ‘all thrill-y’ inside. Nobody guessed who he was—nobody there had even heard of him, perhaps. And yet how much they all owe him! I couldn't help thinking: that shambling bear may go down into the tenderest immortality! Maybe, when I'm ‘an old, old, old, old lady’ and write my memoirs, I shall tell about this late October evening, and my homeward walk, and how I happened to see

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Ansel Rodman when he caught his first sight of Bruin; and everybody who reads will sigh enviously and say: 'Dear me! just think of *that!*'"

The boys laughed, and recalled Rose to this present.

"A minute more, there," Johnny teased, "and you'd have been asking for 'my specs, so's I can read my royalty reports. I am so glad I was a thrifty young woman and began early to save up for my memoirs. Banks sometimes fail, my children, dear—but memoirs keep getting richer—like brandied peaches—every year you have 'em!'"

Johnny's tonal and facial imitations of the reminiscent old lady were irresistibly comical. Born mimic that he was, he could draw in the corners of his laughing young mouth to simulate old age from whose shrunken gums the plate of false teeth was continually dropping to interfere with speech; could veil the lights dancing in his eyes and take on the peering look of age when hunting spectacles. And the quaver in his voice, the unctuousness of manner he put on, made Rose and Davy laugh until the tears rolled down their cheeks.

"That's one o' the things," Johnny went on, resuming his own serio-comic character, "that keeps me from *saving*. I know that when I'm a decrepit gent, Rose'll take care of me with her memoirs."

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"Oh, but consider!" Rose implored him. "You may have years of decrepitude before I'm old enough to publish memoirs. Or I may die under auto or trolley wheels before I'm old enough to write them. Or, fifty years from now, the people of to-day who interest me so may not be the ones that generation will want to hear about. It's as speculative as frenzied finance—collecting memories! You haven't the least way of knowing what'll be precious—to other people—in fifty years."

"I've a 'trade last' for you!" cried Davy, joyously.

"Give it to me," Rose pleaded.

"I said a '*trade last*,'" Davy reminded her.

Rose looked appealingly at Johnny. "Tell me something nice about Davy," she begged.

"Can't—truthfully," Johnny teased.

"When were you ever left speechless before, for lack of truth?" retaliated Davy.

Johnny grinned. "But this time, even my usually vivid imagination fails me."

"Never mind, Davy," Rose consoled, "I remember one I had, from a more discriminating quarter. Mrs. Bristow said——"

"When did you see Mrs. Bristow?" Johnny interrupted.

"This afternoon—I've just come from there. Mrs. Bristow said she thought Davy was one of

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the most admirable young men she had ever met. She——”

Davy winced. “I’m tired of being ‘admirable,’ ” he said.

“Why, Davy!” Johnny expostulated; then added virtuously, “*I’m* not!”

“You haven’t *begun!*” Davy retorted.

“Truth! Bitter truth!” Johnny admitted. But he did not seem downcast.

“Davy,” said Rose, “*I* think you’re the very devil for irresistibleness. *Now* do I get my trade?”

“You do! Oswald Seever and I were talking the other day about the prospects of some people we know, and somehow a little joke suggested itself about your memoirs. ‘That’s all right,’ Oswald said, ‘I tell you I believe in those memoirs with all my heart. Sometimes, when I get to thinking about them, I can just see how all of us in whom Rose has expressed belief, will have to hustle and make good for her sake. I had the doleful dumps a while ago, and was going to burn up a lot of stuff and quit trying (kind of Kipling—waste-basket—Recessional Ode—feeling). And then I had a vision of Rose—forty years from now—sorting over her memories and dropping all those that concerned me in the discard. And I could hear her say to herself: “Queer thing about Oswald! I always thought—” And I lighted my pipe instead of my pyre. Conse-

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quence! I sold two of those things within ten days—and to better magazines than any that'd turned 'em so contumeliously down!"

"There!" cried Rose delightedly. "Even if nothing more comes of my memoirs, I'm sure they're justified. And I shall never—or almost never—question the place of a Mere Person among the Olympians henceforth."

She and Davy had joined Johnny at dinner, but Johnny was what he called "one lap ahead and going like the wind."

"Tell about the Bristows before I have to leave," he implored, starting on his dessert.

"Well," Rose began, "I went up there this afternoon. Emily and her mother were both at home, and I had the pleasantest kind of a call. Mrs. Bristow is a charming woman——"

"I thought you'd like her," Johnny said.

"I asked them to come down Sunday evening and share our bowl of salad," Rose went on. "And at first Mrs. Bristow seemed to hesitate—said she almost never went anywhere; but after awhile she said she'd come—that they'd be most happy to come."

"I don't believe they know many people in New York," Davy remarked.

"They don't," said Johnny. "Emily told me so. Well! I'm off. See you later."

"*Much* later?" asked Rose teasingly.

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"Never can tell—I'm not a prophet," Johnny answered. Then the hall door closed, and they could hear him whistling as he ran down the stairs.

"I don't suppose," observed Davy a little gravely, after a brief pause, "that there is any one else on earth quite so continuously happy as Johnny is."

Rose looked up quickly and caught the gleam of wistfulness in Davy's eyes.

"Oh, yes there is, Davy dear," she corrected gently. "Happiness comes easily—instinctively—to Johnny. But you ought to know that people don't always enjoy most what comes easiest."

"I said 'continuously happy,'" objected Davy argumentatively.

"Well—even at that! Didn't you once get terribly tired of perpetual sunshine?"

"I did."

"But you doubt if Johnny does?"

"Johnny isn't moody."

"That's the reason he won't go as far as you will."

"Maybe not. But he'll have a lot better time going a little way."

"Why, Davy! You've got the sure-enough dumps to-night. Has anything gone wrong?"

"Nothing unusual. Only I had a bully good offer to-day and I turned it down."

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"What for?"

"Well—it was an offer—a suggestion, rather—to write a series of articles—later to become a book—on the history of labor struggles in America."

"Oh, Davy!"

"I knew you'd say 'Oh, Davy!' I could hear you, in my mind's ear, when I was saying no."

"Why did you feel you had to say it?"

Davy hesitated. "For a good many reasons," he began, as if with effort, "but principally on account of father."

Rose looked as if she could not understand. "Why on account of father?"

Davy was gazing out the window, presumably over the little, oblique section of Washington Square they could see from their dining-room, but evidently following the trail of long, long thoughts.

"It would hardly be possible," he answered, without withdrawing his gaze, "for me; the biggest struggle of them all, perhaps, was that of which he was the central figure—which his death terminated—I couldn't—in delicacy——"

"I see," she said softly. "I wonder they didn't think of that before offering it to you."

"I wondered—too—" he murmured.

The rest of their meal was eaten in silence—preoccupied on his part, sympathetic on hers.

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"We'll have our coffee in the living-room," she told the servant, thinking that perhaps the change of place would serve to break the train of Davy's sad reflections.

He recognized her little endeavor and tried to reward it. But she could see that something had rudely touched him to-day in that exquisite sensitiveness that was his about his father. And it was characteristic of him, too, to keep silent about it before Johnny.

After a decent amount of preliminary pretense, so that her request might not seem too obvious, she asked:

"Davy, don't you want to go out and find the Royal Theatre—wherever it is—and see if Ansel Rodman isn't there?"

Davy smiled. "Indefatigable collector of things to remember! Yes—of course I want to. Get your hat."

They retraced her steps of an hour ago, through Tenth Street to Sixth Avenue.

"Did the bear," asked Davy, when they reached the corner, "look as if he were going or coming—to the Royal Theatre or from the Royal Theatre?"

Rose reflected. "I think he looked as if he were coming," she said.

"Very well. Then we'll go south. Query: How far afield from the Royal Theatre would a shrewd bear go in quest of a probable audience?"

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"I don't know that he was a shrewd bear."

"If he was connected with a five-cent theatre, he probably was."

"My notion of a shrewd thing for *us* to do," Rose ventured, "would be to ask a policeman—*several* policemen!"

Accordingly they crossed the avenue and went into Jefferson Market Court. The day session of the Municipal Court was over hours ago, and the first session of the Night Court had not begun; so the court-room was empty, except for a clerk who was immersed in records behind the railing.

Davy was familiar with the place; he had put in a good deal of time here in the days of his newspaper apprenticeship. He stepped around to the desk where the patrolmen report. The night shift was just coming on duty.

"Has anybody here seen—the Royal Theatre?" he asked.

"Oh, easy!" they told him, and gave him the directions.

The Royal was of the ordinary sort of five-cent theatres—a converted store with the minimum of ventilation and the maximum of danger if there should be a panic or a fire from exploding celluloid film.

Davy and Rose were early. The first show did not begin till seven-thirty.

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Ansel Rodman was not there; neither was the bear. At least, the latter was not in such evidence as might have been expected, beside the ticket booth.

Rose began to feel sympathetic. "I wonder if he's walking yet—poor bear!—trying to drum up an audience," she said. "He'll be too tired to do justice to his act."

"And Rodman!" Davy reminded her. "Can it be that he's still walking, too?"

Rose thought it more likely that Rodman was dining somewhere "in the lower red-ink belt"—meaning among the foreign tables d'hôte south of Union Square.

Her surmise was probably correct, for before the show started Rodman came in. He did not see them, but went farther front to a seat.

The entertainment was of the usual order. There was a film that unrolled the story—in pictures, liberally helped out by explanatory print—of a jailer's daughter who was rescued by a duke from the robber band that held her captive. When the duke's turn at captivity came—he was made prisoner by Louis XI—the jailer's daughter helped him to escape, and gave her own life for his in the pursuit that followed. It was a good film—as films go—and had quite as much verisimilitude as some popular historical novels. Louis XI, and the duke, and the jailer's daughter

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looked—to the hypercritical eye—remarkably like New York East-Siders at a masquerade; but here, also, the popular historical fiction—or much of it—enjoyed no obvious advantage. “You say ‘methinks’ too much,” Tommy of the lively sentiment complained to Corp. “I can’t play I’m the Pretender unless I say ‘methinks,’” was Corp’s defence. Doubtless Barrie intended us to expect that Corp would evolve naturally into a writer of Jacobean romance.

After the jailer’s daughter had died and, as Davy commented, the enormous risks and fatal outcome of gratitude had been made quite clear, there was a lively popular song sung by a young man with no discoverable excuse for trying to sing except abundant lung power, of which the girl at the piano was probably jealous, for she did her best to drown him out, and almost succeeded. Then came a film of the inevitable sort: some one running away from some one else, and in the course of the mad chase, apple-carts are overturned, painters’ ladders knocked from under them and their cans of paint spilled, sacks of flour are butted into, and so on. There was no grossness in this film, and it had been inimitably acted—in France—so that the pantomime made it excruciatingly funny. Everybody in the theatre—which was packed—laughed until he cried. It was *good* to make people laugh that way—

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many kinds of people drifted together in here after many kinds of experiences, and presently to drift out again to meet many workaday demands. There was something in the sheer folly of the situations depicted that appealed to all ages and to all grades of understanding. The shrill glee of little children rose as an antiphonal above the bass rumble of men's mirth and the treble laughter of women and girls. Beside Ansel Rodman sat a hugely fat German of middle age, whose merriment was almost volcanic. Once, in a particularly frenzied burst, he slapped Rodman a mighty slap upon the knee. "Ach, Gott!" he cried, like one imploring a respite. And Ansel Rodman, wiping the tears from his own eyes, loved the splendid democracy of that resounding thwack; the German had not looked to see whom he slapped—nor cared to know. For was it not another human being blown by the same gale of laughter?

A girl sang a banal sentimental song, mawkish in matter and set to music without merit. She sang it atrociously, and did a few kicking steps between the verses. Most of the audience received her indifferent efforts with stolidity.

Then came Bruin's turn. There was a film depicting the "Far West" and the adventures of a hunter who went through perils and adventures that would put any arctic explorer to the blush.

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Out of most of these perils he could never have escaped had it not been for the super-intelligent aid of a small black bear. When at last he was able to get back to civilization, the bear refused to be left behind. So the hunter took Bruin back with him, to be a member of his family. But Mrs. Hunter was sub-intelligent and had no sense of bears as household guests. Therefore Mr. Hunter gave her all the gold he had brought with him from the Rocky Mountains, and left home to lead a life rich in affection with Bruin by his side. After the film was finished, the lights flashed up, and there on the stage sat Mr. Hunter—or a very fair replica of him—and Bruin. And when they were cheered by the audience they rose, and Mr. Hunter handed Bruin a red bandana handkerchief in which was bundled all their worldly goods. With this hanging on the end of a stick, over his shoulder, Bruin marched off beside his master, to the soul-stirring accompaniment of vociferous applause and one of the piano lady's muscular renditions.

Lingering as much as they dared in the face of the order, "All out, please!" Davy and Rose waited for Mr. Rodman to come up with them. Talking with him as he came was a man with whom he had evidently just fallen into conversation. This man was most striking-looking. He was of medium height and sinewy build. His

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lean, clean-shaven face was almost lantern-jawed and very colorless. His dark hair was abundant and unkempt. His eyes proclaimed him, at once, the constant companion of the invisible; unmistakably, he was a fanatic of some sort. Whatever it was that he had said to Ansel Rodman, it had interested him instantly. Before the two men came abreast of Rose and Davy, they looked so mutually absorbed that Rose tugged at Davy's sleeve.

"Let us go," she said; "don't interrupt them." She had a horror of breaking in upon any conversation that might be satisfying—of scattering with the trivialties of greeting and introductions, thought that was wistful to be expressed.

Davy would have yielded to her entreaty, but just then there was a commotion behind the scenes. Bruin, feeling "temperamental," probably, had broken from restraint and was returning to the footlights, his absence from which he doubtless considered too prolonged for the public's pleasure, as for his own.

He was so comically human in his evident greed for the spotlight and for applause that Rose broke into hearty laughter. Rodman's attention, withdrawn from his chance acquaintance, passed from Bruin to Rose, and he greeted her delightedly.

He was one of the men of influence and established reputation to whom Davy had brought

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letters when he descended—a raw young college graduate—upon New York with literary aspirations. Rodman's helping hand had gone out to him instantly, as it did to every youth who came to him asking the aid of his experience over the road he had travelled. And the little household, that numbered just the three children whose father had been taken from them by murder, and their mother, a few years later, by uncontrollable grief, appealed so strongly to this strangely detached man that his friendship with it was one of the most intimate he enjoyed. He had never married; he led what most people called a lonely life. Whereat he always smiled whimsically, for he knew that he had more avenues of escape from self than most people have ever dreamed of. In fact, there was hardly any way Ansel Rodman could turn and not find himself interested. No man had ever been more exquisitely designed for the interpretation of human nature. For his personality was so unobtrusive that he could slip in anywhere, and become absorbed, without making anybody conscious of his presence.

When he spoke to Rose and Davy, the stranger would have moved on; but Rodman restrained him.

"Don't go," he said—"that is, unless you must. I'd like to hear more of your ideas. Ah! that is good!" he exclaimed, when the stranger tacitly yielded. "Let us talk as we go along."

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By his assumption of common willingness he made a little group of four. No introductions seemed to him to be necessary. He was not interested to know the stranger's name. What did names matter? Nor did it ever occur to him that the stranger might be interested to know his.

So they moved on and out, these four—commonly interested in life, and therefore mutually interested in one another.

CHAPTER VII

THE MARIONETTES

"THIS gentleman," began Ansel Rodman, when they had got outside, "has just made some exceedingly interesting observations to me. I am sure you would like him to go on with them."

"Oh, if he will, please!" said Rose.

But the stranger seemed embarrassed, made suddenly self-conscious.

"I—why, it is nothing," he murmured.

Ansel Rodman understood. "Were you going in any direction particularly?" he asked.

"I had thought I would go south," the stranger answered. "But it does not matter——"

"I was about to suggest wandering that way," Rodman hastened to assure him.

Rose began to be sorry about the foolish little episode of Bruin which had evidently broken up what was in a fair way to be a valuable conversation.

"I believe," she confided to Davy, when they had dropped a pace or two behind, the more easily to thread their way along the narrow and crowded sidewalks, "that they'd be glad, any minute, to look back and realize that we were lost."

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They were about to carry this benevolent plan into execution when they reached Fourth Street. But there they again were frustrated. Rodman and his new acquaintance halted at the corner and turning around to Rose and Davy, his face alight with pleasant purpose, Rodman shouted above the rumble of traffic and the babel of street sounds:

"We're bound for the Spring Street marionettes. Come on!"

Instead of crossing, he and his companion turned east in Fourth Street and followed it—along the southern boundary of Washington Square, over to Broadway, and on, to the Bowery.

In the quieter stretches of their walk, the Inneses caught fragments of the conversation that had evidently resumed its full strength of interest between Rodman and the stranger.

"I'm delighted," they heard Rodman say, "that I can put you in the way of becoming acquainted with these people and their show. It seems to me that here are nearly all the elements of your dream."

"I wonder," the stranger said, "why I never found them in my prowling."

"You won't wonder," Rodman told him, "when you have seen the place. You might prowl the East Side streets for years, and neither hear of this place nor notice it if you passed it by."

This proved true enough. On the south side

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of Spring Street, a little west of the Bowery, they stopped before an old dwelling house. Ascending three or four front steps, they entered a front room rudely partitioned off with boards. A glass lamp in an iron socket lighted this place, which corresponded to the lobby of a theatre. In a cubby behind the boards, a fat Italian woman sat at the seat of custom. Beside the ticket window was the opening through which those who had paid the price passed into the theatre.

The old house was a deep one, extending well back toward the limits of its lot. Probably four rooms had been thrown together by the knocking out of walls, giving an auditorium about forty feet in length, but narrow—seemingly not more than eighteen feet wide.

The back of the auditorium had tiers of rude benches, rising to the ceiling, against the wood partition and above the ticket-seller's cubby; five cents admitted one to these seats. Below them, a dozen rows of chairs afforded seats at ten cents each. Nearest the stage were a few rows—not more than four or five—where the price was fifteen cents. The only seats unsold when Rodman applied at the box office were in the front rows.

The air seemed nearly impenetrable at first. It was a dense haze of tobacco smoke in which hung, heavily, an assortment of evil odors includ-

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ing garlic—much garlic—and personal uncleanness and mustiness of incredibly long standing; probably not in years had one good whiff of fresh air blown through this place. Certainly not in years, one would have sworn, had the floor been cleaned; it was foul almost beyond belief.

Street-cleaners, push-cart pedlers, dock laborers, railroad section-hands, newsboys, bootblacks—of such as these were the major part of the audience. There were a few women and about a dozen children. Most of the children were hanging in an ecstasy of enchantment over the footlights, which were oil lamps.

The stage was small. It had a back drop, painted on a scale of about one-half, and a couple of rude “sides” more akin to the “tormentors” of the ordinary stage than to any parts of a “set.” The single fly drop—representing sky—was shabby and dirty, a poor thing to suggest Italy’s cerulean zenith; and between where the back drop left off and this sky drop began, one might have frequent glimpses of four swarthy, dirty hands manipulating the marionettes.

The manipulators stood on a rude platform about three feet above the stage. Back of them and all around them—in a way to make a Broadway stage-manager desperately envious—hung up against the wall, thicker than lodgers in a Chinese rooming-place, yet silent as the figures on cathe-

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dral tombs, the actors. Two half-grown boys took down the characters as they were required upon the stage, and dragged them to the manipulators' platform, returning with those who had played their parts and were ready to be hung up again in this Valhalla.

In the right entrance (there was only one) stood the stage-manager, who read all the lines of the male parts and directed the movements of the half-grown boys. His voice was the purest music, and the passion, the tenderness, the despair, the vengefulness he could put into it were wonderful to hear. It was not really necessary to understand the words he spoke; his tones made the story intelligible. Not infrequently one could overhear his directions to the stage-hands—and the fiercest pirate might well have envied his manner and his vocabulary in malediction—then, midway an awful threat to his minions, a cue would come, and without so much as a breath between, the voice of the irascible stage-manager would become the voice of the leading man, pleading like an angel or declaiming like a demigod.

But with all the wonder of his voice, it was as nothing compared with the voice of the girl who stood in the left entrance and read the female lines. One recalled Bernhardt's most golden notes, Duse's most unforgettable inflections, and



The fiercest pirate might well have envied his manner and his vocabulary

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the loveliest cadences of Marlowe's spoken music; none of them was more exquisite than this girl's. Listening to her, one forgot time and place. Under the spell of that voice, tears welled, passions throbbed, and blood ran cold, alternately.

The play was some part of the great chronicles of Rinaldo, whose splendid exploits take a year to tell.

Every one in the vicinity where Rodman and his friends sat down was anxious to make plain to them the exact point of the story at the moment of their entrance. The courtesy was so cheerful, so engaging, that it was hard to suggest by the least ungratefulness of manner that one would rather listen undisturbed.

Hunched over a piano, between the footlights and the first row of chairs on the right, was a strange, pathetic-looking man—now peering short-sightedly at the music before him; now throwing back his head and playing proudly, independent of his poor sight and forgetful of his poor self in the remembrance of fine harmonies.

The auditors knew the play by heart, it seemed. They came to the theatre not to seek a new sensation, but to find an atmosphere they loved and craved, an atmosphere of poetry and drama, of brave deeds and fine chivalry. On any evening when the day had gone hard—when the police had seemed to persecute a push-cart pedler, or

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the boss of the gang had had it in for a White Wing, or work in the trenches had gone unusually hard with some childlike Sicilian who could not understand why an onion and a bit of bread, sufficient to sustain life in a vineyard in drowsing Sicily, is insufficient to sustain it in a street-repairing gang in New York—one could come in here and pick up the thread of the familiar story, whichever epic it was, and be of the immortals for an hour or two. Over on lower Sixth Avenue—to say nothing about upper Broadway—they *had* no immortals, and they were trying to satisfy their soul's starvation with the jailer's daughter.

Strange! how unreal that film had seemed, and how easy it was to abandon one's self to the movements of the marionettes as breathlessly as to the most real actors. There were moments when one could hardly believe that the big dolls were not animate—so cleverly were they handled and so impassioned was the reading of the lines.

After the performance was over, Rodman took his little party behind the scenes. They were allowed to "heft" the puppets, and were amazed at the weight of them; some of the armored heroes weighed upward of two hundred pounds.

When they exclaimed at the strength and dexterity with which these mannikins were handled to such realistic effect, one of the manipulators smiled proudly.

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"Sometimes," he said, in explanation, "since Crusades—in one family—marionette!"

"Makes the theatrical families we know about seem less than mushrooms, doesn't it?" Davy whispered.

They met the girl with the golden voice—a sweet-mannered, shy young woman, but not prepossessing to look at. She was heavily built and rather coarse of feature; the so-brief adolescence of the Italian maid was already far behind her, although she was probably not more than twenty; her early maturity was already past its first flush. Her father was the owner of the marionettes, some of which were venerable puppets that had descended to him with a long theatrical history. Her mother sold the tickets. Her father read the men's lines and managed the stage. The manipulators were her uncle and her oldest brother; a younger brother and a cousin were the much-imprecated stage-hands. No! the piano player was no relation. This she said with an air of conscious superiority, as if to imply that any one may be a piano player—it is a sporadic gift that may develop and die in one generation; not like the immemorial facility of the puppet-showmen.

Ansel Rodman's chance acquaintance was transfigured with eager interest. The shy man he had been as they came here was lost now in the

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zealot. He had forgotten himself. He was conscious of nothing but his theme.

"That's the nearest thing to it!" he exclaimed, as they left the house of the marionettes and turned once more toward the Bowery. "They've got the beauty of poetry—noble sentiment and haunting rhythm—and the appeal to the eye—and the musical accompaniment. But I suppose it would be impossible to transplant the puppets. In another environment the appeal to the eye would have to be made otherwise. The love of them is an Italian heritage, like the skill to work them. Irish, or Jews, or Germans, or Scandinavians, or Slavs would scorn them."

"I dare say they would," assented Rodman.

"But I want," the stranger went on, "to see all that's dear to each nation kept zealously alive here—the folk dances, the religions and commemorative festivals, the music, the hero tales; but not their own exclusively—only to begin with! Then the hero tales, and the tender poetry, of other races—that brotherhood may spread as understanding widens."

"It's a magnificent dream," commented Ansel Rodman.

The Bowery is the place par excellence for cheap lodging-houses where vagrant and unemployed and shifting men abide briefly. An army of these men—most of whom the present scheme

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of things seems, somehow, not to assimilate—always assails the wonder and the pity of the sentient passer-by.

“Look at them!” the stranger cried. “Those of them that have money lounging in and out of low saloons—the only places where they’re welcome, except in missions, and their meetings are over now. Those that haven’t money will be heading for the bread line pretty soon. I’ve been in the bread line—on many a night. And I’ve slept in these lodging-houses. No, I wasn’t ‘investigating’! I was doing the best I could. And I know what it is to be hungry for food. But that isn’t the worst hunger these men suffer! Their worst hunger—whether they know it or not—is for something not just to sustain life, but to make life seem worth sustaining; something to take them out of their miserable reality and make them feel like men the world *needs*. That’s why they drink—most of them!—it’s the only way they know to get away from themselves and their awful impotence. If you could reach them now! If you could get behind their dull preoccupation and leave a spark there—something that would kindle a glow! Books can’t do it—because they don’t read books. And theatres can’t do it—because no theatre but the noblest has the enkindling spark, and no theatre but the meanest wants these men’s patronage. And pulpits can’t do it—be-

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cause these men won't listen to what the pulpiteers say. You've got to get them on elemental principles—like story-telling to children and to childlike races of men. Those marionettes came near being the thing!"

"But the marionettes," reminded Davy, "have an inherited fondness to appeal to. It would be pioneering, over here!"

"It would be harder even than that," the stranger agreed; "it would be trail-breaking. But I hope to do it—before I die."

"I hope you will!" said Rose earnestly. "And I hope it'll be before *I* die, too."

"You believe in it?" he asked her eagerly.

"Of course I believe in it!" she cried. "Who wouldn't?"

He smiled—as if he knew many who wouldn't.

"I think I have some qualifications for the work," he went on. "I was a skilled mechanic once. I know something about men who work. And I was a vagrant—a bum—drink did it! I've 'done time,' too—it was there I got my taste for books—and I know something about the men society has to lock up for its own safety. When I came out I was queer, I guess. Going back to my trade just to make a living for myself didn't appeal to me. There wasn't any one I had to think about—to work for. So I—well, while I was looking round, trying to decide what I would

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do, I had to pick up enough pennies to live on—the price of a lodging and one meal a day, with coffee and rolls in the morning. I was crazy about the libraries—couldn't keep out of them. Books and ideas got to affect me almost like the drink had—I'm that kind, I guess. I found that I could earn fifty cents an evening 'supeing' on the stage—I got interested in the theatre—and I was an actor before I knew it. But I got tired of it. When I had learned something about delivering a message, I found that nine times out of ten the message I got to deliver wasn't worth trying to get over the footlights—the plays we played might have been written in Mars, they were so remote from this world of men. Sometimes I'd see a face in the audience—one white face out of hundreds of white faces against the dimness—on which my eyes would focus. It was a hungry face. It would haunt me. I'd yearn to reach it with something that might comfort, might satisfy. But I had only the playwright's cheap, remote sentences that I might say. Ego-mania of the actor, I suppose! They say we all have it. At any rate, here I am. I've spent this summer trying to study out this problem. When August came I was too deep in it to haunt the theatrical agencies looking for a job. And no agency put its shutters up and suspended business while it went a-searching for me."

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They had turned off the noisy Bowery, with its trains thundering overhead, when they saw that he was inclined to talk. The cross streets whereon no cars ran were fairly quiet now.

They were at the Inneses' door before any of them realized they could have gone half so far.

"You'll come in and have a bite of supper with us, won't you?" Rose said, addressing both Rodman and the stranger.

"Surely," accepted Rodman.

"I think not," the stranger began, hesitating like a man who feels that he should decline, dearly as he would like to accept. "I—you know nothing about me—except what I've told of myself," he faltered.

"Then the honors are even," cried Davy, "for you know nothing about us."

He yielded. "You are very kind," he said. "My name is Ballard Creighton—Walter Ballard Creighton; but I've never been able to feel that 'Walter' belonged with me—so I try to forget it."

"And my name's Rodman."

"Not Ansel Rodman?"

"Yes."

"My dear sir!" cried Creighton, gripping Rodman's hand. He had no need to say anything further. What the name meant to him shone in his eyes.

"And these are my dear young friends the

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Inneses," Rodman went on, "Miss Rose Innes and David Innes. There is a chance that we shall find John upstairs."

They did. He was prone upon the dining-room floor before a saucer of cream and an infinitesimal tiger kitten.

"Miss Goitie Moiphy," said Johnny, sitting up and waving his hand toward the kitten.

They introduced Creighton—or started to. But he and Johnny knew something of each other, it seemed.

"You're John Livingstone Innes," Creighton said.

"On the playbills—just Johnny everywhere else. And you're Ballard Creighton—I've seen you a lot of times."

Creighton seemed not to have heard what Johnny said. "You're Lyman Innes's son!" He spoke as if he were thinking aloud rather than addressing any one.

Rodman and the three Inneses turned inquiring looks on him.

"I was in that strike," he explained briefly—as if he dared not trust himself in lengthy explanation. "I—I'm just one of the thousands of men who—who feel that he gave his life for us." His lips twitched and he turned his face away.

Nobody spoke. But there was abundant eloquence in the way Davy took his hat—as if to

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say: That makes you one of us—and in the way Rose laid a place for him at their table.

When Rose went to the kitchen Goitie Moiphy frisked after her.

“Come here, fickle one!” Johnny cried. “Isn’t there a grateful female alive? Where’s your undying devotion to your rescuer?”

But Goitie paid no heed.

“I was coming out of the theatre,” Johnny began, telling his tale to the two men, “when a young person blocked my way squarely. She had yonder beast in her arms. ‘Say, Mister!’ she accosted me, ‘yeh don’t want a kitten—do yeh?’ ‘What’s the matter with it?’ I sez—suspicious-like. ‘Nothin’!’ sez she. ‘You’re one of my admirers, then?’ sez I; ‘a matinée girl, i’ sooth!’ ‘Aw, quit yer kiddin’,’ sez me frien’. ‘D’ye want the cat, er *don’t* yeh? Me step-mudder won’ leave me have her in the house—an’ I’m a-scairt t’ turn her loose fer fear a dog ’ll git her.’ ‘That being the sad case, I’ll take her,’ I sez. ‘What is her name?’ ‘Her name is Goitie Moiphy—out o’ the po-um.’ I pass hurriedly over the parting—which was painful—and here we are. But I gave Goitie’s ex-parent her new address, and invited her to call, from time to time, and see how Goitie fared. She said she would.”

“What ‘po-um’ is Goitie Moiphy ‘out of’?”

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asked Rodman, who seemed to tease his own brain in vain for remembrance of it.

Johnny recited it. He had the curious New York accent which corresponds to London's coster-speech, down to excruciating nicety.

"Little Goitie Moiphy
Soitingly wuz a boid.
She lived in Toity-second Street
A block from Toity-toid.
She sometimes read de *Joinal*,
And likewise read de *Woild*.
And all de boys loved Goitie,
When Goitie's hair was cuhled."

"That's strange!" said Davy musingly. "The child must come of people who—well! don't you see? People who talk that way, wouldn't see anything in the 'po-um.' It can only have been repeated to her by some one who—who knew it was a parody, and relished it."

"Eh, Watson?" said Johnny, as if concluding for him. "Oh, the terrible Sherlock our Davy is getting to be!"

CHAPTER VIII

EMILY INSISTS ON TEMPTING FATE

I CAN'T go, dear. I'm sorry—for your sake—but I don't feel as if I could. I don't know what madness made me promise."

Emily Bristow began to cry. "I might have known!" she sobbed. "It's always the same—always will be, I see now!"

Mrs. Bristow sat down on the edge of the bed, where Emily had flung herself, and laid a caressing and an entreating hand on the girl's shaking shoulders.

"But, Emily, dear—think!" she pleaded. "Think what this is that you want to do. I know I've been selfish in my grief and shame. You're young and you're entitled to youth's happiness. You have been cheated of too much of it, I know. I grieve myself sick about it, oftentimes. You've been a devoted daughter—too devoted! I'm going to be less selfish—to remember your pleasure more. But this—! You know as well as I do, Emily, that this is impossible."

"I don't see," Emily began, raising her head from the pillow, "why it's so impossible. *They*

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don't know who we are! And if they did! They're broad-minded enough to know it wasn't *our* fault—and that we've suffered for it as much as they have."

Mrs. Bristow was thinking hard. "Are you willing," she asked at length, "to give them the choice—to tell them who you are and let them say whether they want to receive you in their home?"

Emily flushed. "I don't see any use of that," she answered.

"It is the only honorable way you can keep their acquaintance."

"You have met the boys—you let her come here and call——"

"You know how I met the boys—casually, unavoidably—not of my seeking. And as for the call—well, I felt a sneak about that, though she came of her own will, not of my asking. I think now that it was wrong—all wrong. They might not wish even to shake hands with us if they knew."

"I don't believe that!"

"Then test it."

"I can't, Mother. I'm as anxious to bury the past as you are. I don't feel that I ought to be asked to fight it. I wasn't responsible for it. I refuse to bear the blame."

"But you said you didn't think they'd wish you to bear the blame."

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"I don't—but once we acknowledge it somebody else may find out—it may spread. I couldn't bear it—the discovery—the curiosity——"

Emily did not see her mother's face.

"Shall we slip away again?" her mother asked.
"Shall we begin all over—far away?"

"Oh, Mother! After all we've been through—South America—Australia—the ends of the earth—the byways. Haven't I stood enough? We're as safe here as there, if we keep quiet. And I want to stay among people of my own kind—and have a chance."

"I know," her mother soothed her. "But what fate! Almost the first persons we are thrown into association with in New York are the—the children of the man your father killed."

"That's it!" cried Emily eagerly, grasping at her mother's admission of fate. "It must be meant—why do we try to evade it? I come here and try to get work. I have nothing to plead for me except the few meagre little notices of what I did in Australia and New Zealand. Yet I get into one of the best companies here—playing a New York engagement of months—perhaps a year—and the first person I meet at rehearsal is John Livingstone Innes. You go downtown and try to get work—and they tell you that they don't need any one to 'hack' at the women's page or write about suffrage in New Zealand, but that you

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might see Mr. Innes—and before you can refuse, there is David Innes before you, halted on his way through the office and told you want to see him. You hedge and hesitate, and tell him you have never reviewed books. And he laughs and says that that is the kind of reviewer he is looking for. If that isn't fate, I'd like to know what it is? And if it *is* fate, what's the use of trying to resist it?"

Mrs. Bristow looked thoughtful. "Emily," she said, "I've had reason, before now, to think that way—to believe I was following out my fate. But I learned to distrust it. I yielded to what I was pleased to call the inevitable. Bitter experience taught me that I should have fought instead."

Emily loved her mother passionately, and admired her with a reverent awe. But her devoted compliance hitherto had been no real test, for her mother was her all-in-all. Now other loves were stirring in her—the love of life, which was pleasanter here than it had ever been before; and the love of Johnny Innes. This latter she did not admit even to herself, much less to her mother.

"I'm sorry, Mother," she said—and her voice had a note in it her mother had never heard before—"but I can't agree with you. I suppose I must be a fatalist."

Mrs. Bristow smiled, a sad, wise little ghost of

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a smile. She was resigned, perforce; but she could not help being sorry that her dearly bought wisdom would serve not one whit to save her child.

"All young persons who are trying to make themselves believe in what they want to do are 'fatalists'—for a while," she said.

"Things are as they happen here on Sunday evenings," Rose explained to the Bristows. She was in her room with them while they laid aside their hats and coats. "It is Johnny's only free evening, and sometimes we're all here; sometimes we all go elsewhere. Any of our friends who dine at midday—as we do—and can be content with a simple supper which I get myself, feel free to call us up and see if we'll be home, then join us round our salad bowl. Mr. Irving Penhallow is here now. He was a dear friend of my father's, and is a most delightful gentleman. Some time you'll see, I hope, the enchanting place he lives in—and hear the story of his life. It is charming. Then there is a new acquaintance of ours—a man we met only the other evening—Mr. Ballard Creighton——"

"He's an actor," Emily broke in. "I've heard of him."

Rose nodded. "And that is all," she finished. "Dudley Prichard usually comes in—he'll proba-

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bly be here. You'll be interested in him, Mrs. Bristow. Most people think he's the cleverest man we've got in his line."

Mrs. Bristow was inconcealably nervous and shy. Emily, too, was far from being at her ease. Rose was accustomed to shy persons. In fact, she herself was shy; but somehow she seemed usually to be so placed that she had to forget her shyness. For her unselfishness and her sympathy were so strong that they carried down her shrinking by their greater might.

"What an interesting apartment you have!" Emily exclaimed as they loitered through the dining-room on their way from Rose's bedroom to the living-room.

"We have Mr. Penhallow to thank for the beauty of our mahogany," Rose said. "He's a wonderful connoisseur in furniture. When my parents bought this he was daft about Colonial styles and he picked out these exquisite things for them. A little later he had abandoned Colonial for Chippendale and Sheraton. He went from that to Louis Quinze, I believe—then took a jump into some Dutch period that I've forgotten the name of. Just now he's deep in things Florentine."

"He must have a warehouse to keep them all in," suggested Mrs. Bristow.

"That's where the charming story about him comes in," Rose answered smiling. "He doesn't

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keep them. When he gets a collection as nearly perfect as he can, and has remodelled some place to be a setting worthy of it, he sells it all—and begins again.”

“Doesn’t he hate to?” asked Emily.

“Oh, not the least little bit in the world! For by the time he has one place perfected he has got keen on the scent of another and more difficult chase, and he doesn’t want anything on earth but to follow it. We tell him he’s a lovely benefactor—that he goes around leaving beauty behind him, like Johnny Appleseed leaving orchards. But he denies it—the benevolence, I mean. In any event, he’s a philosopher—whether he admits it or not—for he keeps himself constantly in a state of zestful expectancy. He is always interested and always happy. Every period he goes into opens up a new world to him. And he’s one of those delightful persons who have the gift of sharing their discoveries and making their enthusiasms contagious. I’m so glad he’s here this evening.”

Immediately they stood on the threshold of the living-room Mrs. Bristow became aware of Lyman Innes’s portrait. It hung above the mantel, and showed Innes sitting, as she had so often seen him sit, one hand propping his face, his eyes dominant, intent, eagerly questioning.

She had nerved herself for this; but it was harder even than she had expected it would be.

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The four men rose.

"Mrs. Bristow," Rose was saying, "let me introduce Mr. Irving Penhallow—and Mr. Ballard Creighton. Miss Bristow, Mr. Penhallow—Mr. Creighton."

Davy and Johnny were most hearty in their welcome, Johnny, as was natural, constituting himself Emily's host-in-particular and Davy acting the same toward Mrs. Bristow.

"Show Mrs. Bristow your den, Davy," Rose suggested, as soon as she could do so without seeming to plan their escape.

Davy's den was a little place of hall-bedroom size, off the living-room. It had nothing particularly to commend it except Davy's collection of autographs—signed photographs, authors' copies of books, letters, and bits of cherished manuscript. But if one cared for that sort of thing—as Mrs. Bristow did—it was a treasure-chamber in a mild way.

"Oh, there's nothing really valuable here," Davy said, answering her exclamation of wonder—"that is, except of sentimental value. I've nothing very rare, or very old—nothing that has a market value among collectors. Most of the people represented here are living—any one can have their autographs for the asking, with stamp enclosed. But I didn't get mine that way. These are people I know and am proud to know. I'm

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like Rose: I love people the world's debt to whom I see in a vision instead of reading it in a library. Her faith in her friends is beautiful—isn't it?"

Mrs. Bristow smiled a tender assent which seemed to satisfy Davy, who was seldom satisfied with any one's appreciation of Rose.

"Books and books!" he went on, indicating with a glance the filled shelves which ran to within a foot and a half of the ceiling and occupied every available bit of wall space. "But you'll be interested in this," he said, laying a hand on the back of a revolving-chair which stood before his working-table. "This was my dear father's chair in his office at the Capitol—the State gave it to us—he was not a minute out of it, after making his last stand for the striking men, when he was shot."

Fortunately for Mrs. Bristow, Davy's short-sighted, pale-blue eyes blurred with tears and he had to take off his thick eye-glasses to wipe them.

In that brief moment she had steadied herself somewhat, so that when Davy resumed his glasses and was able to see her face there was nothing in it to indicate that her clutch on his arm had been for support, not in sympathy.

"I—I don't see how you bear it," she murmured.

"I love to bear it," Davy answered. "Nobody knows what a help it is to me."

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"You don't try, then, to forget?"

"Oh, no! no! no! it is my great honor to remember."

"Yes—of course. Any one whose honor that was would—would not wish to forget because there was pain in the remembrance."

"There is no pain in the remembrance," he replied.

"No, but regret, of course—that he was taken——"

"Mrs. Bristow," Davy began, studying her intently through his thick glasses, "I wonder if you will understand me if I say that I have tried to learn not to regret my father's assassination."

Her startled look seemed to deny the likelihood of her understanding him. "You mean—?" she whispered almost inaudibly.

"I mean," he went on, "that in my studies—and naturally I have taken an intense interest in political economy and social subjects—I think I have learned to see how greatly Father served in his death. No man by his life could have done for a great cause what Father did by his death. I don't know whether you realize it, but that outpouring of sympathy that followed his death was the beginning of a new day for labor in America. The wrongs of the working man got their first great airing, in the revelations which followed on his murder. That was the beginning of any gen-

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eral sympathy with labor's right to organize. It's a wonderful thing to give your life for a result like that! If Father could have foreseen the outcome, I believe he would have laid his life down gladly. . . . I try not to be selfish. I try to be glad *for him!* . . . and that is why I say I try not to regret——”

She was silent for some time after he ceased speaking, and he made no effort to hasten her reply.

At length, “I think I understand,” she said slowly. “It is a big view you take—a noble view. I am so glad—so very glad you told me. I—I think my mind never got beyond the—the tragedy—before. I am so grateful to you for telling me what you did—and how you feel.”

When they rejoined the others they found the talk touching, for the moment, Johnny's resemblance to the Cavalier, whose portrait hung opposite that of Lyman Innes.

“I wore an outfit like that in a play once,” Johnny was saying, “and the likeness was startling.”

“Never mind that likeness, Johnny,” Rose admonished him. “He gets fatalistic about it sometimes,” she explained to Mrs. Bristow, “and feels kind of in duty bound to act the part as well as look it. You look like your father, too, Johnny dear. I wish you spent more time trying to act like him.”

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She laughed as she said it, making a light matter, superficially, of what was really a serious concern of hers and Davy's.

"That," said Johnny, "is a stab at my profession. I don't believe Rose has ever really got over her idea that it is demeaning, for an Innes."

Rose flushed. With two of their guests actor folk, it wasn't nice of Johnny to slip out of a personal charge and leave the burden on his calling. But also, she reflected, it wasn't nice of her to put Johnny on the defensive before strangers.

"Indeed I have got over that idea!" she retorted. "I'm sure we're very grateful to you—both Davy and I—for having gone into a profession where you meet such charming people—whose acquaintance we may share. There was a time," she went on to explain to Creighton and to the Bristows, "when we knew almost nothing about stage folk, and had all the weird notions about them that many people have. And the revelations we have had! We've never met any one who corresponded in the least degree with our preconceived ideas. Who originates those prevalent ideas, anyway?"

"The same class, relatively," answered Ballard Creighton, "which poses for nearly all pictures called 'typical'; the class that is blatantly in evidence wherever superficial observers are likely to be; the same class—relatively—that started the

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popular conception of the 'Wild West,' and of the 'Sunny South,' and of that coastless country, the artists' 'Bohemia,' and—worst wickedness of all!—that started the popular conception of the laboring man, especially the laboring man who goes on strike. I tell you, if there's ever any day when men are judged by One who can mete out deserts, I'd rather take chances as the hardest commandment-breaker, than as one of those slanderers who, because they are too lazy to look for the truth, pass on a lie about their fellows!"

"Hear, hear!" cried Johnny, breaking the tension that Creighton's passionately earnest speech had drawn.

"You said 'if there's ever any day,' " said Mrs. Bristow. "Don't you believe there will be?"

"No," answered Creighton. "I hope it sometimes, but I don't *believe* it! I don't believe in any religion *as* a revealed religion," he went on, not defiantly, but respectfully and as with deep regret. "I wish I did! I revere all religions, as things men have made out of their deepest need for their uplifting. But I can't make myself believe that any of them has an origin other than in men's wish to think them the truth. I wish this were not so! I wish I believed absolutely in something as the Will of the Divine. But most of all, I wish I believed in the religion of Christ. I'd give anything on earth to believe that! But

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nobody believes it—nobody believes it,” he repeated sadly, “or the world couldn’t be what it is.”

“I think,” said Rose gently, “that nobody believes it *enough*—or the world couldn’t be what it is. But I think also that many people must believe it *some*—or the world wouldn’t be what it is.”

“Rose loves humanity,” Davy said, as if reminding Creighton, “and believes in it. She is what you would call an idealist.”

Creighton smiled. “So do I love humanity,” he replied, “and believe in it. Though I am what you, perhaps, would call an iconoclast. I love it in spite of what my eyes have seen of its weakness. She loves it because of what her vision perceives of its strength. I would have chosen her way—had choice been mine. But with the way I know, I must do my best.”

“And such a splendid ‘best’ you have to do!” said Rose, her eyes alight. “Davy, have you told Mr. Creighton what we thought of—about Lucius McCurdy?”

“No,” answered Davy, “but I will.”

“And as I know, I’ll slip out while you’re telling, and put the kettle on.”

“McCurdy,” Davy began, “was a classmate of mine in college. I think that even then we felt sure Lucius was going to have a unique career of some sort. He’s as handsome as a

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young Greek god and as silver-tongued as—as Demosthenes; and he didn't need *pebbles* for it, either! He's a tremendous swell—part of the time: plays polo and leads cotillions to beat the band. And the rest of the time—well! I'm going too fast. He studied law and got into the District-Attorney's office. There he got the little cases to prosecute—the petty criminality of Cherry Hill and such like. He got interested in Cherry Hill and its 'gang' of young ruffians. And, first thing we knew, he had gone down there to live. He couldn't have set himself a more Herculean task. But he was equal to it! Cherry Hill adores him—he's a power there—and through Cherry Hill he has laid his gloved grip on politics. He's a big henchman now. And there's talk of his being Governor not many years hence. He's a wonderful 'stall' for his party to put up—aristocratic connections and Cherry Hill constituency! And he's working for it. His slogan is 'Practical Politics!' He thinks that when he gets in power he can use the power for good."

"Old, old delusion," Creighton muttered.

"Yes; and no!" said Davy. "That is, it's old, and has usually proved a delusion. But with Lucius, I'm inclined to believe—well! he has demonstrated in a small way. I don't take stock, either, in the man who says, 'If I had a whole lot of power, or of money, I could do a whole lot of

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good,' and is undisturbed by the fact that with the power and money he has got he is doing next to nothing at all. Lucius isn't that sort. For instance, there's a club in the Cherry Hill district. It's called an 'athletic club,' but the kind of athletics it favored made it the breeding-place of about a third of the mean criminality in New York. Lucius has made that club over. He has made it a power for decency and order. And the club *doesn't realize that it is reformed!* That's Lucius for you! I haven't *begun* to tell about him—but he wants you, Creighton, to go down there with Rose and me, and dine with him, and tell him your idea, and what you need to give it a trial."

Creighton did not look as eager as Davy had hoped he would. "I doubt," he said almost ungraciously, "if he and I could hit it off. We may be working to the same end, but we're working toward it by such different means."

Davy flushed. "That's it!" he cried. "You dreamers are all so antagonistic to one another. That's how you defeat yourselves. Why can't you agree on the essentials and pass the non-essentials by?"

Creighton smiled. "Dreamers have never been good compromisers," he said. "I'm afraid it is not in human nature that a man should be both. Perhaps it is the compromisers who make the

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dreamers worth anything to the world. At any rate, I don't want to be the one to balk your purpose. And of course I'd be interested to meet Mr. McCurdy."

"Supper is ready," announced Rose, standing in the doorway with a fetching little apron on.

"And here's Goitie Moiphy," Johnny cried, as that wee personage emerged from some snug corner, yawning and stretching sleepily.

"How," asked Emily Bristow, glancing up at the gilt cage where a canary was sleeping, head under wing, "can you keep a cat and a canary-bird—separate?"

"We don't know that we can," Rose admitted; "but we're trying. We all love little kitties and we love birdies, too. Maybe it's unwise to try to indulge both loves. Maybe it's meant that every one should choose—and abide by one. But we're seeing. We'll tell you all what we discover. Davy says we're putting ourselves in the way of much distress. But I try to think we're learning a good deal, too. Birdie is a passive factor. Anxiety centres in Goitie Moiphy. When she looks wickedly at the bird I have to remind myself that Goitie's progenitors have been looking wickedly at birds—and mice—since the Garden of Eden had an angel with a flaming sword set at its gate. And we mustn't be unfair. We mustn't applaud Goitie for jumping at a paper we dangle

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for her and pet her if she happens to catch a marauding mouse—then whip her if she jumps at the bird. I think that maybe, if Goitie stays here and keeps me in mind of this philosophy, the day may come when I shall see, also, that it isn't fair to expect the laundress to have prowess enough to stand all day, and every day, at tubs and ironing-board, and yet delicacy enough to keep from rending all our clothes into ribbons."

"There's a philosopher for you!" cried Johnny. "And she has to do all the mending."

"Don't carry your compassion too far," Creighton entreated, "or you'll be pardoning all kinds of rapacity on the plea: 'for 'tis their nature to.'"

"To know all is to forgive all," Rose reminded.

"I don't believe that, either!" Creighton laughed.

"Inveterate unbeliever!"

Her further reply was cut short by the ringing of the door-bell. Davy answered.

"It's Dudley—Mr. Prichard," Rose said, as his voice was heard in the hall.

And Mrs. Bristow thought her keen eyes told her that there was a look of woman-consciousness in Rose's face which revealed its own unmistakable story.

Prichard was one of those dominating personalities that, immediately they enter upon any scene, seize the situation and make it absolutely their

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own. He did so now, though three of the four guests at table were strangers to him.

"I'm sorry to be late," he began. But Mrs. Bristow thought his sorrow was for their sakes, not for his. "I've been with Emstead all afternoon—blocking out work—and time's nothing when you're doing that."

"What is it now, Dudley? What powers that prey will soon be quaking in their hand-sewed boots?" Turning to Mrs. Bristow, Davy went on: "You doubtless recognize Mr. Prichard's name as that of our most redoubtable Thunderer."

"Of course," she murmured.

"Thanks, Davy, for omitting to say 'muck-raker,'" Prichard said. "This time I hope it's going to be a bit constructive in effect—not merely knocking down. But of course there'll be startling disclosures—so much has been suppressed. It's to be the history of labor organization in America—with special emphasis on the real, unwritten, secret history of some of the biggest battles between labor and capital. It's immense! You must know a little about it, Davy."

"A little," Davy admitted reluctantly.

"You have your father's papers—haven't you?"

"Yes."

"I told Emstead I thought you had. He's been digging into the subject a bit. And he says that the newspapers of that year—the great strike

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—refer frequently to the enormous correspondence that poured in upon your father.”

“That was undoubtedly destroyed,” said Davy.

“Still—if you’ve no objection—I’d like to dig among the papers and look,” persisted Prichard.

“Of course—” Davy seemed anxious to make an end of the subject.

“It’s going to give me a fine chance to set forth his influence,” Prichard went on, looking at Rose.

But Rose’s seldom-failing enthusiasm was not there to meet his expectation.

“I thought you people would be all up in the air about it,” complained Prichard; “and you’re less interested than if I were going to write about Uruguay.”

“You must forgive us, Dudley,” Rose entreated. “But the great strike—as you call it—means so much else to us than labor history.”

“Yes!” said Davy shortly. And Mrs. Bristow, lifting her eyes and daring to steal a look at him, caught no glint of his manner of an hour ago when he had spoken to her of his father’s death. She thought she read, instead, a look of agonized apprehension.

“Oh, God!” she murmured in her heart. “What does he *know*?” And, pleading a headache, she got away early, Johnny going with them as escort.

CHAPTER IX

TWO DREAMERS MEET

AT a little before six-thirty one evening that week, Rose and Ballard Creighton and Davy got off a Third Avenue "L" train at Chatham Square, and stood for a while on the bridge before descending into the street.

Below them the Bowery: cheap theatres, cheap dance-halls, cheap clothing stores, cheap eating-places, and cheap lodgings. Tawdriness everywhere, yet a distinctive sort of tawdriness not in the least like that of other mean streets. That distinctiveness is hard to define but easy to feel. The Bowery is cheap, but it is prosperous—oh, very prosperous! It is the Broadway of the great East Side. It sells its commodities cheap, but they are cheap commodities, and the margin of profit runs high. And while individual expenditures may, as a rule, be small, they are great in the aggregate—on the Bowery. Also, "hot times" are not unknown there; a crook or a beggar or a sailor on shore leave is just as profligate a spender of his means as a crooked financier or a beauty-parlor faker, or a country buyer on

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Broadway. Most people agree that Broadway is a unique thoroughfare. But the Bowery is startlingly like it except that it is on the nickel basis instead of on the basis of the dollar.

Banks and pawnshops; saloons and gospel missions; lofts where the sweaters toil and "gardens" where they dance and drink; vagrant men and playing children; women of the street and blue-bonneted Salvationists; country lads fresh from home and crooks of every degree of infamy—the Bowery was at its best and worst here.

To the right, as they stood facing south, Rose and Creighton and Davy looked off obliquely, through the main highway of Chinatown. Gay-colored lanterns swung on the balconies of Chinese restaurants; soft-shod Celestials flitted through the street in great numbers; lights were bright in the windows of their shops; and by every alluring device known to them the quarter was made gay with a strange, foreign gayety irresistible to round-eyed youth as well as satisfying to hollow-eyed vice when all else had palled.

Below Chinatown rose the great cliffs of the Canyon City. As if builded against some jagged mountain side, they rose, tier upon tier, culminating in the Singer tower which assailed high heaven more daringly than anything had done since the confusion of tongues fell on Babel's builders.

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"This," said Rose, "is like taking you up into a high mountain and showing you the kingdom that you want to enter."

"It—it's enough to frighten any one," Davy muttered.

Creighton smiled—a smile that was unafraid. "You must never think of men in the aggregate," he said. "Think of them as individuals the most important of whose experiences have been like your own; and where they have done differently from what you have done, they have probably not done differently than you would have done in the same conditions. It's working on men in the aggregate that makes so many missions to man fail. The deadliest thing you can do for any man is to treat him as one of an indistinguishable mass. What we all want is assurance that in us are all the potentialities of conquest. Do you know what are the two most elemental—and so, most universal—of all stories? 'Jack-the-Giant-Killer' and 'Cinderella.' Jack's story shows how the littlest bit of a boy can destroy giants—which is the most natural desire of any male creature: the desire for prowess. And Cinderella's story shows how the shabbiest little girl may be a dazzling beauty underneath her rags and able to charm a prince—which is the natural desire of any female creature: the desire to charm the 'giant-killingest' Jack in sight."

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Davy's mind was busy at once in the world of books, following those two undying stories through their course in literature.

"That's a *cinch*!" he exclaimed presently. And they all laughed.

At the foot of the stairs they turned east, and within a minute or two they were at McCurdy's door. The street he lived in was hardly a stone's throw from the Bowery, but as remote in effect as if it had been miles away. It was an elegant residence street when George Washington was President. Many of the houses in it dated back to that time, or very nearly to it; one or two were said to be even older. And by some strange chance this street had survived in dignity through all the changing fortunes of its neighbors. Long years after the residents of all the other streets in Cherry Hill had moved up nearer Murray Hill, the residents of this street stuck to their homes with a proud tenacity. When one of them succumbed he usually tried to find for his house a tenant who would take it entire, for private residence use only—this out of deference to those remaining in the street.

The newcomers were the political aristocracy whose policy demanded that they live in the ward, but whose spoils made it possible for them to have the best the ward contained.

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McCurdy had taken the first two floors of one of these houses. The upper floor was occupied by two maiden sisters of an ex-sheriff—elderly women—who had spent all their lives in Cherry Hill, although not by any means all in this part of it.

A Chinaman answered their ring and asked them to walk upstairs. McCurdy was at the top to welcome them.

“I told Wing we would dine up here,” he said, leading them into his sitting-room. “It is so near election that I’m likely to have a good many calls, and there’s a restraint about dining with half a dozen political callers sitting within ear-shot beyond a portière.”

The second-story front room was very large—the full width of the house, which was about thirty feet, and a good depth, making it nearly square.

It had a beautiful old white marble mantel and an old-fashioned grate such as New Yorkers got all their heat from until the comparatively recent introduction of furnaces. In the grate, banked high as only skilled hands can do it, a hard-coal fire burned—large-egg furnace coal, evenly glowing, and sending out a steady warmth without snap or crackle.

In the middle of the room the dinner-table was set—spread with plain satin damask ironed to

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full satin gloss. It was distinctively a man's dinner-table, Rose noted with appreciation. There were no lace doilies—there was not even a centre-piece of lace or embroidery under the low silver bowl of short-stemmed roses. There were candles, though, in exquisite silver candlesticks of plainest pattern; and red silk shades with a minimum of fluff or frill threw down upon the snowy cloth and shining silver a deep rosy glow. Lucius was not one of the masculines whose idea of cheerfulness is six gas-jets or light bulbs going full blast, or every window-shade rolled to the top to admit the glare. He liked soft lights, it seemed, but he liked to get them with the least possible fussiness of effect.

This room was very expressive of Lucius McCurdy. On the walls were some exquisite etchings he had brought from abroad—a couple of Haig's: Mont St. Michel and the interior of Burgos Cathedral; a Pennell, showing a characteristic bit of Paris; a Whistler nocturne; a dry-point by Helleu. In a corner by one of the windows was an ancient desk with many mysterious-looking drawers and cubby-holes, which Lucius had bought in Seville. On it, among other things, was an inkstand of Edwin Booth's, bid in by Lucius at the sale of Booth's effects.

Lucius had stopped now and then in his busy life to buy a picture or an antique or to indulge

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a sentiment in some such way as the Booth ink-pot; but he had never had time to become a collector. His possessions represented the brief interludes in his life, not in any degree its main business.

His silver was all new and very bright. He had had no time to collect silver. When he needed some he went to Fifth Avenue's best house and bought what he needed of its plainest pattern.

The dinner was quite wonderful. Wing was a wizard in cookery. He served a filet of sole that might have made Marguery envious; only it was in a style quite all Wing's own, and not at all like Marguery's. And the capon!

"I told Wing I wanted you to eat some of his capon," Lucius said, when they exclaimed over it. "That's right! It *isn't* like mere food—it's an *experience*."

It was. So was the salad of alligator pear which Wing knew how to dress so that it was ambrosial.

There was no sweet. But with the coffee service, which he laid before Rose, and cordials, which he put down by Lucius, Wing brought in a bowl of nuts—big, paper-shell pecans from Texas—some hot toasted crackers with a Camembert just ripe enough to run like thick country cream. Then he withdrew—vanishing noiselessly, like some genie that had evoked this meal

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from fairyland and was gone thither again as miraculously as he had come.

"You don't wear your ring, do you?" said Rose.

"Ring! What ring?"

"The Aladdin ring you rub when you want these wonders to happen."

Lucius smiled. "I keep it in my pocket," he answered. "Want to see?"

She nodded, and he put two fingers in a vest pocket.

"Don't drop it," he begged anxiously.

"I won't."

Mysteriously he conveyed it to her: a gold double eagle.

"That's the Aladdin thing to rub!" he laughed. "All I have to do to command Wing's wizardry is to rub one of those a little larger—ever so little larger—than any other he can see, and he is mine. Presto! It's easy."

"I quarrel with you!" cried Davy. "That isn't all. For first you must find Wing. I know people with more gold than you've got, Lucius, but they haven't got your—your perspicacity."

McCurdy bowed. "Well," he said, "I guess the combination's necessary. That's kind of a credo of mine. Perspicacity to see what you want isn't much use without power to get it. And power's not worth much without perspicacity to see what you want."

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"But of the alternatives—if there must be an alternative," Rose hastened to say—"it's better to see and not have than to have and not see; isn't it? 'I'd rather love what I can't have than have what I can't love.'"

"Much rather!" Creighton affirmed. "It's the seeing—the wanting—the loving—that makes magic in life."

"How long do they last without ever *overtaking*?" Lucius asked.

"That depends. It's a matter of education, I'm beginning to think. Not of book learning—though I think that helps a lot—but of the general character of ideas a man absorbs from his fellows. Where discontent is in the air we breathe—where *being a man* is forever and forever lost sight of in the stress of trying to *do something*—it's hard to keep on dreaming and be satisfied with dreams. We all make it hard or easy for the rest."

"Davy tells me," began Lucius, "that you have a big idea for this neighborhood."

"I hadn't thought of it," Creighton answered, "as for this neighborhood in particular. I could name others uptown where ideality is quite as lacking. Only I thought I'd like to try it out here first. Not but that the uptown hearts are just as hungry—in their depths—but the uptown hungry people are less willing to admit it. Hon-

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esty's a matter of standard. Downtown they 'pinch' pocket-books, and their consciences are callous but their hearts are soft; and if you touch their hearts they let you know—that's not against their code. But uptown they manipulate markets, and their consciences are callous though their hearts are soft; but if you touch their hearts they don't let you know—for that is against *their* code. So I thought I'd like to try here first."

McCurdy was interested. "That's right," he asserted. "Down here you can be pretty sure what they think of you. Up there you never know."

The downstairs bell had rung a minute ago. Now Wing appeared at the sitting-room door.

"Man to see," he murmured apologetically.

"I'll come right down," McCurdy answered.

"I want Lucius to show you that downstairs region as we go out," Davy said after McCurdy had gone. "It's a curiosity. He has the parlor fitted up with consummate tactfulness. It is nice enough—according to Cherry Hill standards of taste—to impress any one who is shown into it with Mr. McCurdy's prosperity and his respect for his callers, but not too fine so as to make anybody feel uncomfortably inferior. Then he keeps this room as a sort of sanctum, the intimacy of which is yielded only to the most faithful.

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Sooner or later, practically every one gets up here—and Lucius seems to judge unerringly just how soon or late the reward should come in each individual case; then the proud person who has been called 'higher up' goes swaggeringly about Cherry Hill and alludes artfully to the soul-warming hospitality of Mr. McCurdy's 'own settin'-room.' "

Creighton looked a bit contemptuous of this, but he said nothing.

Rose, however, was keen to read the look. "We're all children," she pleaded. "We love to think we've been 'especially entreated.' The wisest mothers know a lot about such tender little play. It is magic with children—all children."

He smiled at her gratefully. "I never had much childhood," he said, "and I forget—sometimes. But I'm sure you're right."

"There's a kind of pretty way that I can only call playing with life—for lack of a better expression," she went on. "I don't mean evading or belittling its seriousness, but translating it into something that is full of charm. When I was little I think I lived almost altogether in that inner world of 'pretend.' It was related to the actual world—only it was so much more delightful. I did the things the actual world demanded; but I pretended that I did them, not because I

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was obliged to—as dull tasks—but because I chose them to do. Sometimes when I had a particularly hateful thing to do I pretended I was a queen and was doing this thing to show a good example to my subjects. I had a nice sense of *noblesse oblige*, it seems. Anyway, I got through life quite charmingly by ‘playing pretend.’ And I play it yet—a good deal.”

“What do you pretend now?” Davy wanted to know.

But she blushed and wouldn’t tell. To uncover the pretence while you’re playing with it is—oh! so fatal. A girl knows!

McCurdy looked serious when he returned.

“Trouble?” asked Davy sympathetically.

Lucius nodded. “It’s never very far away in Cherry Hill.”

“How about Murray Hill?” Davy ventured.

“It’s there, too, of course—lots of it. But it’s easier to fight it—or ought to be! It’s trouble—lots of trouble!—when your scapegrace young son, on Murray Hill, runs off with a soubrette. But you can mend it. You can buy off the soubrette and send the boy around the world on a tour of forgetfulness, and when the boy comes back the nicest girl you know will grab at him just the same. But in Cherry Hill——!”

He broke off suddenly and faced them like one pleading his case. “Look here!” he cried, “you

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people don't always know just what to think of me because I'm playing the political game. But I tell you I've got my dream just as you have yours—and I'm on the level about it. I don't say I'm not ambitious—but I do say that I'm ambitious for much more than personal success. I want to help! I want power because I want to throw it into the fight for those who are powerless to help themselves.

“Take this case that's freshest in my mind: here's a man of fifty—the wreck of what was once a magnificent creature who ought now to have been scarcely past his prime. Ten years ago he was horribly maimed—crippled for life—in an explosion in a stone quarry where he was working. At forty he was done for—down and out—and he had six children under fourteen years of age. The explosion was no one's fault, so he could collect no damages. Industrial insurance would have helped him—but we have no industrial insurance! His wife scrubbed offices; his oldest boy went onto the streets selling papers; and this wreck of what had once been a powerful man sat at home and tried to face the future. When he got so he could move around he didn't sit at home. He went out and drank. Do you blame him? *I* don't! It has been hell in his life for ten years—the ten that ought to have been his best—his prime. To-night he comes to me in

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the grip of the awfulest thing that has happened to him yet. His oldest girl has gone to the bad. He's Irish—you know what that means to the Irish! No other people take it quite so hard. Yet he says he doesn't blame her! There isn't anything she hasn't had to fight against. And finally she's gone. She doesn't know that the worst is to come—is what she's flown to. And he drags the wreck that was once himself over here and sobs out that he'll go through hell for me if I'll help him find his girl."

. . . "Can you do it?" Rose asked softly, breaking a tense silence that was growing unbearable.

"I can't! But I can set in motion the powers that *can*. And that's why I say: 'Blessed be power.' If I ever get more power—enough more power—I'm going to stand for industrial insurance for *one* thing! And for another I'm going to fight the——"

He stopped abruptly as if he realized that he had gone too far.

They looked at him eagerly, but refrained from questioning.

"I forget caution sometimes," he said. "With you I don't need it; but if I don't learn the habit I'll forget myself some time when it'll be fatal to me. What I didn't finish saying"—he lowered his voice as if afraid the walls might hear—"was

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this: I'm going to fight the exploitation of girls—of Poverty's daughters."

Creighton smiled bitterly. "That determination *would* kill you if your party found it out," he said.

Lucius winced. "I know it," he said. "I know my party's black records. But I know, too, its better side——"

"You're not going to quote clam-bakes and baskets of free coal to widows—the glass beads it gives our modern Indians to get control of Manhattan?"

Rose was afraid this might soon lead to bitterness.

"After all," she interposed smiling, "we're glad the Indians didn't keep Manhattan!"

Creighton saw her intention and respected it—but took a parting shot as he backed away.

"I don't know," he grumbled good-humoredly; "sometimes I wish they *had* kept it!"

"The thing for you two," reminded Davy, "is not to call names, but to see where you can get together to help Cherry Hill."

"That's right, Davy," Lucius replied. "I'm for any man who wants to help Cherry Hill."

Creighton nodded appreciation. "I wonder if we can—" he said.

"Of course we can!" McCurdy assured him. "I don't ask you to work my way. I'll work your way—with you."

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Creighton looked embarrassed. There are few experiences more difficult to go through with than receiving the other man's courteous surrender.

"I—" he began, and stammered. "I don't want to seem to be the dreamer who won't yield," he said—"to come down here and ask you for your very potent help, then decline to let you direct. You know a lot about Cherry Hill—probably much more than I do. I want your advice. Only, it's this way—Do you believe in the Christian religion?"

"Why, certainly," answered Lucius.

"Then you believe that when God wanted to save the world, He knew that it couldn't be done through temporal power—that it must be done through a kinship of suffering and an appeal to men's hearts. He knew that the motive power to move the world upward must come from within and not from without——"

"Yes."

Creighton smiled. "You *don't* believe it!" he said, not challengingly, but sadly. "Nobody believes it. And yet the strangeness of it! Here am I, a poor, groping pagan, clinging to a belief in men's awakened ideals as the thing to work for. And here are you, like Archimedes, looking for a place to stand and move the world with your lever."

Lucius took no offence where it was so very evident none was intended.

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"We must work together," he said warmly. "Come, let's discuss ways and means."

They fell into earnest talk about where Creighton should begin and how he might shape his course.

"There's that thing," said Lucius, nodding in the direction of his superb Æolian which filled one corner of the room. "That and the Victrola. They seem to be sources of a lot of pleasure. I've a small fortune in discs and rolls—everything from 'My Wife's Gone to the Country' and 'Has Anybody Here Seen Kelly?' to Caruso and Sembrich in 'La Bohème' and Michelova in 'Ave Maria.' I have informal musicals here sometimes. If you want to try out your ideas very gradually, feeling your way, I could ask a few of my Cherry Hill friends in here some evening and let you consult with them. They'd have suggestions."

This appealed to Creighton. "By all means!" he said. "I'd love that. They're so ready to help—always, in my experience. The man with a job is quick to help the man without a job. The man with a grip on life is ever ready to 'hold on for two' while some poor floundering chap gets on his legs again. We want them! We need them! We can't go far unless they'll help. And helping—of course—will strengthen them. I saw a street incident one day. It was a glori-

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ous day about two weeks ago—mid-October—sunshine goldenest of the year—it got into your veins and made you glad to be alive. I was walking along Fifth Avenue at noon hour. The lofts had emptied their throngs into the street. Everybody seemed greedy for that wine-sap air. I can't describe it—but that was it—the love of life—everywhere. Walking ahead of me, going north, as I got to Twentieth Street was a young man carrying a light cane. He stopped at the curb tapping—feeling his way. Then I heard him speak—a voice that would break your heart—no self-pity, no anything—just acceptance. 'Will somebody please help me across?' he said. Before I could take his elbow another had responded. I got a good look at them as they threaded their way across. The young man was well dressed, evidently well-to-do. The man who was helping him was middle-aged, shabby, evidently ill-to-do. His manner was not gracious. The moment they reached the opposite curb he dropped his guiding touch on the blind man's shoulder. If he acknowledged the 'Thank you,' I did not hear it. He was sullen—that shabby man. Alone in all the streetful he seemed unwarmed by that love of life which the gold sunshine kindled. At Twenty-first Street I watched. He responded again to the pathetic request. When that street was crossed he did not relinquish his hold. The

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blocks are short, you know, and Twenty-second is a mean crossing. . . . When I left them at Twenty-third Street they had rounded the corner and were going toward Sixth Avenue chatting pleasantly. The older man's walk had lost its sullen slouch. . . . No one else in all that throng, I reflected, could have done for that discouraged man what the blind man did for him by *needing him*. That's it! You grip any man in a way that tells him unmistakably you *need him* and you've—you've done about the best for him that you can do."

Creighton told the little incident most beautifully. His fine voice, his actor's art, gave him expression for his deep feeling in a degree that moved his hearers profoundly.

Lucius laid a hand on Creighton's shoulder. It rested there expressively for a moment before he trusted himself to speak.

"We need you—all right," he said when he could say anything.

Rose, being a woman, dared to wipe her tears away.

"The—the thing you make me see," she said, "is—overwhelming. I love your crusade with my whole soul! I'm so glad I live to-day. I'd rather watch your fight and such as yours than any the world has ever seen."

"Truly?" asked Lucius.

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"Truly! I'd rather know you men than Richard of the Lion Heart and the men like him. They went crusading to recover the Holy Sepulchre where the body of Christ had lain. You go crusading to recover His Spirit in men."

"We don't call it that," murmured Creighton.

"It doesn't matter what you call it!" she cried. "Call it what you will—it is the biggest impulse that has moved the men of any age. And I'm glad I'm at the roadside to see you go marching by."

CHAPTER X

CATHERINE AND THE CREHORES

WHEN Goitie Moiphy had been about a week in her new home she was visited one afternoon by her erstwhile mistress.

Rose's maid of all work answered the ring at the front door and confronted a young person who, without preliminaries of any sort, thrust a gentleman's card at her. It was Johnny's card.

"Does he live here?" the young person asked.

"He does; but he's not at home."

"Have youse got a cat named Goitie Moiphy?"

"Yes."

"Well, she uster be mine, an' he tol' me I could come an' see 'er whenever I wanted to."

The servant hesitated. "Wait a minute," she said, "and I'll ask Miss Rose."

In less than a minute Miss Rose was at the door.

"Why, howdy-do, Goitie Moiphy's ma," she said. "Come right in, won't you? I think Goitie's asleep this moment. But she'll be glad enough to wake up and see you."

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When they had seated themselves in the living-room they regarded each other with frank interest.

"My name's Innes," volunteered Rose, "Miss Rose Innes. What's yours?"

"Crehore," said the young person—who was about ten—"Miss Mollie Crehore."

"That's a pretty name."

"I think Rose is prettier."

"Do you? Well, let's change!"

Mollie looked at her. You couldn't always tell what people meant until you saw the way they looked. If they was fooling you, you could kind o' tell it from their eyes, or else their mouths would twitch in the corners and you'd know that they was giving you the laugh.

Rose's eyes betrayed no grown-up condescension and the corners of her mouth behaved straightforwardly.

"All right," agreed Mollie; "let's."

The change of names effected a change of relations. Mollie "put on" a good deal in her effort to act as she thought "Rose" should and Rose found a charming irresponsibility about being "Mollie."

Goitie Moiphy, sad to relate, evinced no interest in being called upon even by her late relative. She yawned prodigiously when waked, stuck her front claws deep in the cushion of the window-

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seat, stretched herself almost alarmingly, then curled up and went back to sleep.

The caller, however, was not bitterly disappointed.

"She's got it nice here—Goitie has," she observed, looking around. And that seemed to satisfy her; whether because her devotion was supremely unselfish or because her maternal instincts were less strong than her love of adventure, one might guess but not know.

That the call she was making was giving her extreme pleasure there could be no doubt.

"Is that," she inquired, gazing intently up at the Cavalier, "the man I gave 'er to?"

She seemed regretful to learn that it was not.

"I thought it was his pitcher from a masquerade," she said. "That's a swell costoom, all right!"

"Who else lives here?" she asked presently.

"My other brother," Rose told her.

"Is that him?" She pointed to the portrait of Lyman Innes.

"No; that is my father. He is dead."

"And yer ma?"

"She's dead, too. There are just the three of us."

"My ma's dead. But I got a step."

"A step?"

"Step-mother. They're no good. My pa made a mistake. He says so himself. But he had four

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kids an' didn' know what t' do. An' she was kind o' sore on workin' out—so she took him. They're both sore now. It's somethin' fierce!"

Evidently there were no pretenses where Mollie lived.

She went into Davy's den. "Gee!" was her comment, "is this a libarary?"

Rose nodded.

"There's a girl to our house," Mollie went on, "who's read as many books as this, I bet ye. She's always readin' when she ain't workin'. She gets the books out of a libarary."

Then Rose understood that Mollie took this for a "loan collection"; that she had never known any one to own for personal purpose more than a stray book or two and could only conclude that so many volumes argued an institution. Rose explained that the books all belonged to her brother.

That was all that was said about books on the occasion of this visit. But Mollie called soon again.

"Say!" she remarked, "I was tellin' that girl in our house what a lot o' books youse have, an' it made her sore. She says so many people have books an' don't read 'em, an' so many more is crazy fer 'em an' can't git 'em."

This interested Rose. What Mollie had first said about a girl who was "always readin'" she had given no second thought to, taking for granted

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an average tenement girl's taste for cheap romance. But this speech that the child repeated was bitter; it smacked of a book hunger not that of a novel-reader who is usually content to devour a story and hurry on to the next, but that of a book-lover who craves to have ever at his elbow the books he has made friends with.

"What is the girl's name?" she asked.

"Cath'rine Krakopfsky. She's a Russian."

Nothing more deeply mystifies the child mind than the ability of adults to infer nationality from a name. Rose remembered this, and instead of remarking: "Naturally—with that name," she said "Oh!" as if the explanation had been quite necessary.

"She works in a tailor-shop," Mollie went on. "But she's awful smart. Her sister's name is queer—it's Sonia. They ain't got no folks. Their ma was killed in Russia; an' their pa killed hisself. It's fierce in Russia!"

"Yes?"

"You bet!"

"You know these girls pretty well."

"They rent off of us—our hall room. But they don't eat by us. Cath'rine's good to me. When my step-mother beats me, she takes my part. Sonia don't care—she's all fer clo'es an' a good time. But Cath'rine treats me awful good. She says she's fer any one that's got it hard."

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Rose's heart had gone out to Catherine.

"Will you tell her to-night," she asked Mollie, "that we are the kind of people that love books, too? And will you say that we love them so very much that we are always glad to share them?"

"Sure."

"I don't suppose she'd come up here with you some time—on a Sunday, say?"

Mollie didn't think she would. She didn't know why; but that was her guess.

"But if I returned your call on a Sunday morning, for instance, perhaps I'd see her?"

"Yeh. But don't come too early. Because she don't git up till seven, Sundays, an' then she does her washin' an' ironin' by our kitchen stove."

After Mollie was gone Rose found herself haunted by the thought of that Russian girl whose life had seen so much tragedy; who toiled in a tailor-shop; lay abed till seven on Sundays; did her own laundry work; read many books, hungrily; was kind to an ill-treated child; and, doubtless, had her own anguished misgivings over a sister who was "all for clo'es an' a good time."

How adequately the child had reflected her! Rose felt better acquainted with Catherine Krapfsky than with many a person she had met and talked with a score of times.

Davy was interested when she told him. He wanted to go with her when she called, but she

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was afraid that "two might seem like a delegation."

"If she likes me I'll get her to come up here," she said.

"If she likes you!" cried Davy, who could not conceive any other possibility.

"She may not," Rose went on. "Things are hard for her. Maybe she'll think I'm too favored of fortune. I'm not sure that if I worked in a tailor-shop—a sweat-shop, probably—and lived in a tenement hall room, and knew my soul was big—in tune with big ideas—that I'd like a girl who had nothing to do in the world but enjoy herself among people of charm and intelligence."

"Rosie," said Davy seriously, and ignoring what Catherine Krakopfsky might think or feel, "do you ever feel as if you had nothing to do in the world?"

Rose nodded as if unwilling to trust herself to speech.

Davy gave her one look as if he were wishing for the eloquence that was not in him. Then he said:

"Oh, Rosie, *dear!*"

Davy was sitting in his father's chair in the little den. Rose perched on the arm of it and laid her soft cheek against his hair.

"I saw Bruce Norbury to-day," he said.

Rose thought he was trying to change the painful subject.

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"Did you?" she answered. "Where?"

"At The Players, at lunch. He asked for you." She smiled and tweaked his ear.

"What would you do, Davy, to any one who met you and did *not* ask for me? What deed of violence?"

"I don't know," Davy answered. "I've never had to think about it."

"It's your intimidating manner," she teased.

Davy ignored this. "Bruce and I sat there talking long after the other fellows had gone," he went on. "He's no end of a fine fellow."

"I always liked him," she agreed. "Where has he been this long while?"

"Abroad; he saw a lot of the people we know over there."

"Any specially good news of anybody?"

"Well, not any one thing more startling than all the rest. But he had pleasant news of almost everybody."

"That's fine! As if favors were divided."

"He saw Schuyler Monteith's portrait of you in Dresden. It was in the exhibition."

"Good!"

"People were praising it very highly, he said."

"I'm so glad for Schuyler."

"And he met Forquarson in Capri."

"What was he doing?"

"Finishing a new novel. He read parts of it

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to Bruce. Bruce thought it was big stuff—much the biggest Forquarson has done.”

“Italian novel?”

“Naples and Sorrento and Capri for setting; but chiefly English and American characters. It’s kind of laid among the art colony there—‘The Sojourners’ is the title—and there’s a girl in it—the heroine—that Bruce told Forquarson reminded him of you. Forquarson said he was glad she did; for you had inspired her.”

“Not really?”

“Bruce told me,” Davy went on, as if he had not heard her exclamation, “that there wasn’t anybody of his acquaintance who was so often and so eagerly inquired after as you were. He said he had always been proud to know you, but that lately he had been quite puffed up about it.”

“Davy,” said Rose chidingly, “you’re fabricating. You know I won’t ask Bruce if it’s so and you’re taking a long chance—to flatter and console me.”

“Rose,” reminded Davy, “I’m not a fabricator. My imagination won’t let me be—whatever my inclinations. I begin to suspect that George Washington may have been like me. He couldn’t tell a lie because he couldn’t think of anything to say.”

Rose laughed. “I miss the way we used to do when we were children: ‘Honest Injun’ and

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'Cross my heart an' hope to die.' It was so convenient; and as it was quite in the social code, nobody was offended when you asked him to swear he was telling the truth."

"Children 'romance' so much they don't expect to be taken seriously except on oath," Davy said.

"I don't believe grown people do either," Rose went on. "And yet you can't ask them 'Honest Injun?' They think you ought to know when they expect to be believed and when they don't. And I'm such a ninny I can't tell half the time."

"When you call yourself a 'ninny,'" Davy questioned, "of course you don't expect any one to think you mean it—'Honest Injun'?"

"Of course I *do*!" she protested earnestly.

"Then, Rose," said Davy solemnly, "there *is* something the matter with your intelligence!"

Mollie lived on East Twenty-fourth Street. When Rose reached Madison Square on Sunday morning, the church-going folk were on their way to eleven-o'clock service. The beautiful Byzantine church at the corner of East Twenty-fourth Street—Stanford White's last work—where Dr. Parkhurst's congregation worships, was filling rapidly. As she passed the corner of Fourth Avenue she encountered numbers of soberly but handsomely clad, sedate persons wending their respectful ways

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to the several houses of worship on Fourth Avenue in that neighborhood. Church bells tolled; there was almost no traffic on these streets that on week-days see a constant congestion of it. A Sabbath-day peace was over everything. This is an interesting, a suggestive bit of that strange composite we call New York. Here stands the Flatiron Building—ten years ago a world's wonder; now dwarfed into insignificance by the awe-inspiring Metropolitan tower. There, where the old Fifth Avenue Hotel used to be—centre of New York's transient elegance—a monster office building looms. Two sides of Madison Square have yielded entirely to business; the other sides are half-yielded. Of what was once an aristocratic residence neighborhood little remains except a few old dwellings most of which are now converted to semi-business purposes, and a few churches whose congregations are made up partly of transients and partly of old members whose sentiment brings them back on Sundays to worship God in a neighborhood they have long since abandoned to the Captains of Mammon. One gets among the people who go back on Sunday mornings from mid-October to mid-May to worship in neighborhoods where they once had their homes, glimpses of an element that has been enormously potent in the history of New York. They do not figure in the newspapers; they are not

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frequently encountered by the hasty foreigner who comes over here to write "impressions." But they have been sturdy conservators. Save for them and for their like New York would scarcely be an American city in any sense. They are dying off; their children are not held by the same loyalties. . . . There will be conservative New Yorkers forty years hence. But one wonders where their conservatism will express itself.

Five minutes' walk east in Twenty-fourth Street gives an observant person plenty to think about. The social down-grade is sharp. Past Stanford White's Byzantine church and the towering bulk of the Metropolitan Life Building, one soon comes upon the region of boarding-houses—quite good boarding-houses, pretty good boarding houses, fairly good boarding-houses—then (going eastward all the time) frankly dingy boarding houses. Then the tenements begin and the squalor deepens as one approaches the river and the region terrorized by what is known in criminal records as "the gas-house gang." Twenty-fourth Street is a little differentiated from some of its neighbors by the presence of many stables and of a huge ice-cream factory.

All this world that is epitomized on Twenty-fourth Street east of Fourth Avenue is typical New York. But it knows as little as it is known

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by that other typical New York which comes to worship Sunday mornings in the environs of Madison Square; as little as either of them knows or is known by that other typical New York which begins with a decided Tenderloin flavor where Twenty-fourth Street runs west from the square and proceeds through disreputable tawdriness to shabby respectability, and so on to the other river at the city's western side.

The riddle of the city was as ever-present to Rose as to the Arab is the riddle of the Sphinx.

Mollie lived where Twenty-fourth Street ceases to be merely dingy and is just beginning to become squalid. She was playing on the sidewalk and watching for Rose; so she saw her from a distance and ran to give her greeting.

"Howdy-do, Rose!" Miss Innes said. (When Mollie came to her house they still "traded names" and revelled in the "different" feeling the change gave them.)

"I'm Mollie *here*," the young hostess answered. "Rose don't *fit*."

"Are there no Rosies in your street?"

"Oh, plenty! But they're Sheenies—and it ain't the same. Besides, she'd kid me awful."

"Who would?"

"My step——"

"Oh!" said Rose, as if hurt that Mollie could have thought such a thing, "I would never have

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mentioned it when any one was around but just ourselves."

Mollie looked reassured. "Some people don't ever understand," she said. "But Cath'rine does. I told her; and she said she b'leeved she liked you."

She led the way and Rose followed. The house, like most of its neighbors, had once been a residence of the well-to-do. Perhaps in the heyday of its gentility it had rented for fifty dollars a month. Its rent-roll now must be at least a hundred dollars. The Crehores had the second-floor front rooms. What had once been the big bedroom with an alcove—"father's and mother's room" in the by-gone days of one-family tenancy—was now two rooms. The alcove was rented to the Krakopfskys and the main part was the Crehore's parlor by day and sleeping-apartment of the four children by night. Where there had been a huge press for clothes and linen and what-not, there was now a tiny, unventilated bedroom where Mr. and Mrs. Crehore slept. Back of it was a room where, in other days, the smallest children probably slept, close by their mother so she could hear them call. This was a kitchen now. There were two other rooms on the floor—a back hall room and a large back room; each was separately sublet.

Everything about the Crehores was on the bor-

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der-land between shabbiness and squalor. They had, for instance, a "parlor suit." It had been tawdry to begin with, then had grown shabby; it was now past all pleasingness even to the most perverted taste; but it is something a degree this side of squalor to have a parlor suit of any kind. They had a carpet on the parlor floor that kept excellent company with the furniture. Their æsthetic efforts helped to tell the story: they had a gilded plaster horse, with one foot uplifted; a large box covered with small shells and with a mirror in the top of it; a picture of St. Anthony; a pink plate—undoubtedly a "premium"; and a celluloid photograph album in a plush and nickel frame.

Mr. Crehore had some kind of a semi-mysterious job "off the City"—the reward, no doubt, of a meagre political influence. From certain things that transpired it seemed that this was not an arduous job—and that it would have been a much better job for Mr. Crehore had it entailed a little more labor of another sort than hanging about saloons. He was a rather good-looking man of not more than thirty-five; sandy-complexioned, blue-eyed, solidly built. His wife was not much younger than he. She had been self-supporting since she was a child. In a season of more than ordinary ill-luck she had grown more than ordinarily tired of self-dependence; Crehore had

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offered her a home—perhaps his need of a housekeeper, fired by his Irish blood, made him an ardent wooer—and she had accepted him. In a month she was sorry. In two months she had begun to be, as Mollie put it, “sore.” She constantly upbraided Crehore for what he had brought her to. And yet, somehow, she did not leave. Crehore was not the kind of man a woman leaves. No one will ever understand the psychology of such things, perhaps. But there are Bill Sykeses in all walks of life whose very blows inspire loyalty. Crehore was a wife-beater; but he was one of the kind of men whom their women do not leave.

In this atmosphere but not *of* it Rose found Catherine Krakopfsky.

Mollie as a go-between had been no less successful with Catherine than with Rose. She had reflected faithfully the little she knew of her recent acquaintance, and the good deal more that her childish intuitions perceived.

Catherine was very much on the defensive, fearing patronage. But in Rose’s presence no one could feel that way for long. Her quick sympathy put her at once in Catherine’s place, and her natural timidity was made even greater by her fear of seeming to intrude.

The Crehores were not impressed with Rose. After what Mollie had told them, they had ex-

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pected some one much more consciously and evidently superior. Mrs. Crehore even had entertained visions of Mollie being adopted by a rich lady—and taken out of her way.

Rose felt that she had failed to impress them, and she was sorry—for Mollie's sake. But she felt, too, that Catherine liked her, and that was more important. For the Crehores were not people she could do anything for. No treasure-house to which she held the key contained anything that they would take if they were so privileged. It must be enough to keep open for Mollie the door of another world where she alone of all her kindred seemed to have citizenship. But for Catherine——!

Rose's heart overflowed with gratefulness when she thought how many doors to delight would open at her knock to admit Catherine.

Not one to delay, was Rose. She asked the Russian girl to come that afternoon and see her.

"My brother Davy will be so happy showing you his books," she said.

"I haven't any clothes to make calls in," Catherine replied.

Rose's face showed pain and disappointment.

"I hoped you'd know we'd never think of that," she said.

Then Catherine was ashamed. "I'll come," she promised, and squeezed the little hand she held.

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She came early. Only Davy and Rose were there.

"That's Lyman Innes," she said when she saw his portrait. "Are you related to him?"

"We are his children," answered Rose.

"You ought to be proud," said Catherine Krapfsky.

"You know about him?" asked Davy—meaning, as was evident, not his governorship but the use he made of it.

"One does not read American economics and not know," she replied.

That was all it took to make her at home there.

And when, later on, Ansel Rodman came in, and Ballard Creighton and Lucius McCurdy, she did not remember that she had ever been strange. There was such community of interests here as made her feel that she had come at last among her own.

There was much talk of Creighton's experiment and what had been said about it at the "smoker" in McCurdy's sitting-room last night.

"It's hard to keep ideals over there," she said, indicating with a nod the section of the city they had been talking about. "But if one can only learn to do it it makes political economy so simple—for then every man's a king. What do you think a sweat-shop will be to me to-morrow—or

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the Crehore's flat hideous with quarrelling to-night? For I have been where thoughts are patents of nobility and where earnestness to help makes of us all one kin."

CHAPTER XI

THE SWORD FALLS

ROSE and Davy breakfasted together at eight o'clock each morning; Johnny did not rise till ten.

The morning after Catherine's visit their talk was all about her for a while.

"I can't see," said Rose, "why a girl with an intellect like hers should work in a sweat-shop. Why couldn't she teach?"

"Teach what?"

"Teach school."

Davy smiled grimly. "She's a nihilist," he reminded; "that's one reason. Another is that she speaks perfect English but with a strong accent."

"Then, couldn't she teach languages? She's a fine linguist—like most Russians of education."

Davy shook his head. "The woods are full of good linguists, dear; and speaking languages doesn't imply the ability to teach others to speak them. In the labor market, tailoring brings more than translating or any other use of foreign tongues can bring."

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“But there must be other things she could do—ways to use her brain!”

“There probably are some other things, dear; we’ll try to help her find one of them. But a girl in Catherine’s position may be ever so capable, yet not be able to find the place for her capabilities. For one thing, she hasn’t had much time to look; she’s had to do what she could get to do and to keep hard at it—to live. For another thing, she hasn’t had any friends. And everybody needs friends. It’s all very well to say that merit makes its own way and nobody can keep it down. But that’s not even a half-truth. If merit gets a chance it makes a few friends, and the friends begin to praise it until they get a dozen people waked up to this particular merit; then that dozen makes a gross; and so on. Most people are sheep; they don’t have ideas; they wait around for some bell-wether to show them where they want to go. After you’ve been working on newspapers for a while you learn a few things about the way reputations are made and ‘the right man’ is found for a place.”

“I can never be grateful enough,” Rose cried, catching up Goitie Moiphy who was sitting always expectant beside her chair, “that we have found Catherine—and poor little Mollie. Lucius and Mr. Creighton were interested in Catherine—weren’t they?”

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"Yes, indeed; they'll both be worth a lot to her and she to them."

"Where"—Rose tried to speak casually, but the effort was not a good one—"is Dudley these days?"

Davy looked up sharply. His quick ear caught the tone of anxiety in her voice and it made him fearful. But he, too, tried to seem casual in answering.

"Out of town, I suppose—digging up stuff for this new series. Haven't you heard from him?"

"Only a line to say that he would be out of town for a few days. Davy, do you know, I can't help wishing that *you* had taken that job."

"Do you, dear? Well, I've been wishing, lately, that I *had*. Dudley'll do it a hundred times better than I ever could have done it. But it would have given me a chance——"

"Did you let Dudley have father's papers?"

"Yes; I got the boxes out of storage and expressed them to him."

"Have you ever gone through them?"

"Oh, yes—every one of them."

Rose looked relieved. "Was there anything there that might be—of help to him?" she asked.

"Certainly—pretty nearly everything relating to that strike is on record in the letter-files and newspaper-scrap books."

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"You'd think," said Rose, "that those would naturally have gone into the State archives."

"The State gave them all to us," Davy answered.

"Wasn't that—unusual?"

"Oh, I don't know. Somebody up at The Players the other day—I forget just who it was—told me of his effort to locate certain of the old letter-files at the White House. Until very recently, he was told, it was the custom of each President to take with him, when he retired into private life, all the interesting records of his Presidency. He inquired around Washington at the same time for a lot of things he fondly supposed were preserved there, and found that most of them had been carried off as curios by the officials under whose charge they fell. The whole mass of correspondence concerning the arrangements for Lincoln's funeral—for instance—was considered the private property of the Treasury official who had the details to arrange; his heirs offered the lot at private sale a while ago. Thousands of documents which ought to belong to the Government are in private hands throughout the country. There hasn't been much feeling about 'archives' in the United States until quite recently."

"Then Dudley won't have to go to the Capital to get anything on that strike?"

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"Well, you see—he'd naturally want to go. There might be things there—very important things. When you're trailing clues in research work you get so keen on the scent that you can't rest until you've dug in every conceivable place where there might be a particle of the truth. For in history, of course, the truth is hard to come by; everything you find seems to deny or at least to discount everything else; and you go on and on and on—hoping to find the last elusive bit of evidence. Then you begin to sift and weigh; to qualify every man's testimony by what you know of his prejudices, and so on—gathering, scrutinizing, challenging, eliminating, building up, until you've come to what you hope may be an honest approximation to the truth. I've had tastes of such work. It gets a grip on you no one can appreciate who hasn't felt something of the sort. I can understand! You get on a trail and you'd sell your only other suit of clothes to follow where you think it leads. It's a magnificent madness. I hope I'll be able to indulge myself in it some day."

"I hope you will, dear." Rose smiled tenderly up at him as he rose from the table. But Davy thought he could tell there was anxiety behind the smile.

"How is Mrs. Bristow doing?" she asked him—as if the other subject had ceased to interest her.

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"Very well. I haven't seen her since that night she was here. But I send her out a bundle of books each week, and she sends the reviews in promptly. They're good, too. But the five or six dollars she can get from the sale of the books is a pretty poor return for all the work she puts into her reviews. I wish she had something better."

"Dear Davy," murmured Rose, kissing him; "he's always trying to boost somebody into a better place."

"Look who he has forever putting him up to it," retorted Davy.

Davy liked to go up to The Players when he could for lunch. Nor did he feel that the time it took him to go between Park Row and Gramercy Park and the time he spent lingering over his lunch was ill-spent for his paper. For a literary editor gets from the printed pages that pass under his eye only a small part of what makes his columns interesting to readers; the rest he gets from contact with men of the world where books are made. The steady inpouring of scores upon scores of volumes, smelling, all, of fresh ink, tends soon to drown a man's sense of individual values. He doesn't read the books, of course; but he must know what they are all about; he must have some idea of the probable worth of each; he must exercise good judgment in his selec-

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tion of certain reviewers for certain books. If he is a just man, he does not give the new Henry James novel to a reviewer whose avowed favorite is the creator of Sherlock Holmes; he does not let the work on Spanish cathedrals go out to a man whose sense of art is in subordination to his anti-papacy so that he "foams at the mouth at mention of a priest." He sticks to his own specialty among the books that come to him for review—or as nearly to it as he can, whatever it may be—and he prides himself on keeping up a reviewing staff large enough and capable enough so that a majority of the books that come in can go out for review to some one who is really interested in them and can compare them with other books of their class. The ability to keep up a strong staff of reviewers is no mean one—because all the reviewer gets for the job is the books he reviews; if he is trying to make any money out of his reviewing, he sells the books to a dealer for about fifty or sixty per cent of their list price; if he does the job just to get free of cost the new books he is interested in, he probably keeps the books. The chief value of a literary editor is epitomized in something like this: "Say, Sam, the Era Company is bringing out that Waterhouse book on Thibet. You're the only man I know of who's been to Thibet. Will you look the book over for me?" If "Sam".

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likes the literary editor he probably agrees to review the book; he knows he'll read it anyway, and he may as well get it for nothing. In a hundred ways like this, the literary editor serves his readers. If his department is well conducted and attracts the interested attention of many book-buyers, it becomes of value to the paper's publishers not only as a popular "feature," but because of the large amounts of advertising book publishers are glad to put in columns that book-buyers are known to scan. Yet no matter what revenue he may bring his paper, the literary editor is supposed to conduct his department at no expense except that of his own salary—which is never embarrassingly large.

Davy's wide acquaintance was one of his main assets as a literary editor. Another asset was his special ability to review books dealing with sociology and political economy. But as valuable an asset as he had was his prodigious memory of the publishing output for a decade past, at least. His mind was a storehouse of "Who's Who and What He's Done." He knew, as Johnny put it, "just how everybody stacks up," and yet he had an ever-keen interest, which he was able to communicate in a measure even to his doggedest reviewers, in seeing how each new work measured up to the author's previous standard, or fell behind, or set him forward in a class ahead.

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He drifted around a good deal, picking up literary information, and was a familiar figure about The Players, the Aldine Club, in those corners of the Brevoort where bookmen foregather, and in other places where the talk is of those things of which books are made. His thick thatch of light sandy hair; his near-sighted blue eyes behind their thick glasses; his round shoulders; the way—peculiar to stoop-shouldered, near-sighted persons—that he carried his head forward as if he were always straining intently to see, to hear, all contributed to make up an appearance that people did not readily forget. No one was ever openly charmed with Davy as with Johnny, so that it was plain to be seen that they were captivated. Davy wasn't captivating; but nearly every one who knew him liked him—though they were much more likely to tell their fondness to some one else than to show it to him. He was one of the kind that does not seem to invite manifestations of fondness or friendship; but his readiness at all times to "boost" some one ahead into better recognition of his merits had made him many warm friends—as he was presently to discover.

Dudley Prichard came into The Players at lunch time on that very day when Rose and Davy had been discussing him at breakfast. He was lunching with Sam Hamilton at a table near by

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where Davy sat with Oswald Seever and Bruce Norbury. When Davy's coffee came Dudley and Hamilton got up from their table. Hamilton stopped only to speak, on his way out, but Dudley lingered.

"I want to talk to you, Davy," he said. "Can you give me a half-hour this afternoon?"

"Yes—sure," Davy answered.

"Where?"

"Anywhere you say."

"It's about a job I'm on," Prichard explained to Seever and Norbury. "Davy knows a lot about it, and I want him to go over some details with me."

"Anywhere you say, Dud," Davy said.

"Going back to the office from here?"

"Yes."

"I'll go that way with you. Look for me in the library when you're ready to go."

"Brilliant fellow, Prichard, all right," murmured Seever when Dudley's back was turned. "And a hard worker, too. He gets big prices for his stuff, but there's no end to the labor he puts into it. He really tries to get to the bottom of things. Half the fellows don't, it seems to me; they're satisfied if they can kick up a big dust and make everybody exclaim against it."

"Yes," said Davy; "Dud's coming on fast—turning out strong stuff." He seemed abstracted

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as he spoke, as if his mind had strayed elsewhere, beyond Prichard's cleverness; and he drank his black coffee quite hastily instead of lingering over it as he liked to do.

"Well, boys, I'm off," he announced, and went to find Prichard in the library.

Davy thought Prichard acted as if under some constraint, but nothing out of the ordinary was said until they had reached the street. Naturally, Davy would have taken the Subway at Eighteenth Street; but any talk is, of course, impossible in the ear-splitting racket of the "tube."

"Do you mind walking a bit?" Dudley asked.

"No; I'm glad to."

So they turned eastward to Irving Place and strolled down that quiet little "backwater" of the traffic currents toward Fourteenth Street.

"Davy," began Prichard nervously, "I've been digging for dear life into this labor thing."

He paused as if he thought that perhaps Davy would guess what he was trying to say and would help him out. But Davy did not speak.

"I've"—Prichard went on desperately—"I've turned up a lot of stuff that has—has surprised me completely."

Again he waited. But "Yes?" was all that Davy said.

"I—Davy, this is terribly hard for me to say—but I—some of the revelations concerned your

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father—contradicted the—the general impressions about his—death.”

Davy bowed his head.

“You know?” Prichard asked.

“I know.”

“Have you always known?”

“I have always known. It—it came to me in a way I will—tell you—presently.”

“Do the others know?”

“You mean Rose and Johnny?”

“Yes.”

“I don’t know. You’ll think that strange—but I don’t know. There have been times when I thought Rose knew. And then, again, I’d be sure that she didn’t know. I—I hardly think it can be possible that she knows or she’d be betrayed, some time, into giving a sign—she loved him so—she is so jealous of his fame——”

“And Johnny?”

“I can’t believe Johnny knows. His is such an open nature—he’s out with everything. If he had known it all these years I’d surely have found out. He couldn’t keep it from me——”

“Have you any idea how generally it is known?”

“Naturally, no—but not very generally, I believe. Everything that could be done was done—to keep it covered.”

“It was—I don’t know that I have ever been

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so shocked," murmured Prichard. "I—it puts me in a hard place, Davy."

Davy lifted his head quickly and looked at Dudley Prichard.

"A hard place?" he echoed uncomprehendingly.

"Of course! It's hard—you know how much I think of Rose—of all of you—it's hard that this disclosure should fall on me——"

"Disclosure?"

"Why, yes; I'm on this job—I find these facts—what can I do?"

Davy turned and faced him. "You—you can't mean that you thought of—of publishing that?" he cried furiously.

Prichard's ire rose under the goad of the angry incredulity in Davy's look and tone.

"Publish it?" he retorted. "Why, what else can I do? I undertake to ferret out and set forth the facts in this phase of the history of industry in America. In getting ready to handle the biggest story in the annals of labor strife, I uncover the most startling example of truth-suppression and misdirected hysteria that this country has ever known, with one exception. What can I do? Shall I put myself on record in perpetuation of what I know is untrue? You know what is involved, Davy. Say you understand!"

"Shall *I* speak untruth?" cried Davy. "I do

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not understand! God! May I *never* understand how there could be a man like you!"

"You are unjust!" Prichard exclaimed, wincing.

Davy made no reply.

"Is this—do we part over this?" Prichard asked.

Davy was silent for a moment. Then: "Dudley," he said, "if this blow could fall on me alone, I wouldn't—stoop to plead with you. But it can't! Other hearts must break—among them the sweetest and tenderest heart that beats under any breast. If you—if you stab Rose with this thing—if you put out the light in Johnny's laughing eyes—I—I believe I shall *kill you!*"

He spoke in a low tone, but with a quiet desperation that was terrifying. He was not threatening; rather, he seemed horrified at his own purpose, yet unalterably sure of it.

Prichard glanced uneasily about the quiet street. There was that about Davy which made it seem that he was quite capable of doing as he said and of doing it here and now. He quickened his pace so that they might the sooner reach Fourteenth Street. On that noisy thoroughfare this painful talk could not continue.

"Davy," he begged pacifically, "this has been a terrible shock to you—to both of us. Don't be hasty in condemning me. Think it over fairly from my point of view—I thought it over from

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yours. I'm not going to tell anybody. Nothing will be ready for print for weeks and weeks—it will be a year, at least, before the series reaches that point where this story comes in. Don't be rash. Give me credit for something—for coming to you first of all when I had found this out and telling you how things stood. I could have waited, Davy; I could—this has been damned hard to do—I could have turned coward. But I couldn't face you with this preying on my mind. And I couldn't face Rose, knowing that I was concealing this from her. I—we understand each other, Rose and I—I think she loves me—but I couldn't let her go on without knowing this. If she, too, hates me, I must bear it. But I shall have done——”

A taxicab drove up to the curb. Davy must have hailed it while Prichard was talking; he bolted forward now and jumped into the cab.

“Hey, Davy!” Prichard cried. “Where are you going?”

But Davy, inside, pointed to the driver to go toward Fifth Avenue, and as the cab shot forward he leaned toward the driver and gave him the address.

In about five minutes Davy was at home.

Johnny was not there; he had gone out immediately after luncheon. Rose was in her room getting ready for the street. She had decided she

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would go uptown and call on the Bristows. When she heard a key in the lock she supposed Johnny must have returned for something.

Davy came into the dining-room and called:

"Rose!"

"Why, Davy!" she cried, running out to him. "Are you ill, dear?"

Davy looked ill—mortally ill—but he declared he was not.

"I just had something I wanted to talk to you about," he said, "and I stopped here on my way back from The Players."

Rose was reassured, although it was a little startling that Davy should have anything to talk to her about that could not wait till dinner time.

"Nothing has happened, I hope?" she asked anxiously.

"Yes, Rose, dear," Davy answered, "something has. Don't be frightened. But I—I wanted to talk to you about it before any one else did."

"Not Johnny——?"

"No, dear. Not anybody—on earth."

He motioned to her to sit down on the big davenport in the living-room, and he sat beside her.

"I have just left Dudley Prichard," he began. There was that in the tone of his voice that told Rose the rest.

She clutched his arm fearfully.

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"Not—not—" she gasped; the words would not come.

"Rose!" implored Davy. "Rose! What *is* it?"

She flung her head upon his breast and broke into a passion of tears.

For a few moments Davy soothed her in silence. When it seemed as if she might be able to command herself to answer, he asked her: "Dear—you know?"

"Yes," she sobbed; "I know."

"How long?"

"Oh, very long—many lifetimes, it seems to me."

"Who told you?"

Rose hesitated. "Mother," she said. The shame her mother had not felt in telling it overwhelmed her now as she admitted to her brother that their mother had done this thing.

Davy repressed the first exclamation that rose to his lips. After a pregnant pause, "I wonder *why*?" he murmured.

Again Rose hesitated; it seemed impossible to tell this; she couldn't bring herself to frame the words, even to Davy who knew his mother so well that he might know how to understand—perhaps even to forgive—her jealousy. Rose's silence was telltale; Davy could guess what it was she would not say.

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"How *could* she?" he whispered under his breath.

Rose heard him. "It—it was an awful thing for her to do," she said, "but she didn't realize that it was. I'm sure she was unsettled in her poor mind by the shock, the grief. And the turn her melancholy took was dwelling on her wrongs, not on her loss. You and Johnny were in school and in college—away from her—most of the time. I was with her—I knew. She said she had to have some one to talk to about her wrongs—and so she talked to me. But she didn't want you boys to know. She—she said it was better for you to believe that father was a—good man. Davy!" Rose went on heart-brokenly, "that was the most dreadful thing of all—mother couldn't remember any of his great goodness. She forgot everything but that one thing. She used to say that she had to 'pretend' so much before the world that it was too much to ask her to pretend before me, too. And she—couldn't understand why I should love him so. She wasn't rational, you see!"

Davy was overwhelmed. His mind was travelling back over all those years when he and Johnny had been away from home getting their education and living the hale and hearty life of boys among their peers, while this infinitely tender little creature with her great love and her great

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sensitiveness had spent her days under the hideous pall of that jealousy and brooding melancholy; the mother who should have been protecting her with every loving care making, instead, a forced confidante of this poor little child, filling her mind with black wretchedness that she must hide and hide and hide all her life through. . . . It was almost beyond belief! And now, through another to whom her sweet trust had gone out, this blow was to fall on her and there was nothing that could be done to save her.

Davy groaned. His mind was on the rack, and the torment wrung from him one groan of anguish unbearable. . . . Murder was in his heart for the first time in his clean young life—red lust to kill.

The doorbell rang. He heard Dudley Prichard's voice in the hall. His face went livid. Then, with a cry of terror, he bolted from the room, through the dining-room, and into Rose's bedroom. Slamming the door shut behind him, he locked it and threw the key out the window.

CHAPTER XII

"THE OBLIGATION OF THE TRUTH"

THE Inneses' servant had not heard Davy come in. She knew that Dudley Prichard was always welcomed; and thinking that Miss Rose was in her room getting ready to go out, she directed Mr. Prichard to the living-room and went to announce him—reaching Rose's door just after Davy had slammed and locked it.

"I'm here, Nora," Rose called to her from the living-room.

Discretion was not in Nora; and for the most part the lack of it was no serious drawback in this household where everything was, in her own phrase, "as plain as day." She had seen a man disappear into Miss Rose's room. There could be only one explanation: he was a burglar.

Nora's eyes spoke terror. "There's a robber in the house," she declared. "He's in your room."

"It's Mr. David, Nora," Rose answered. "He came home feeling badly, about fifteen minutes ago."

"Can I do anything for him?" Nora asked.

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“I don’t think so. He just wants to be quiet.”

Nora had not failed to note the evidences of tears on her dear Miss Rose’s face. Her warm Irish heart misgave her about Mr. Davy; but Miss Rose’s manner was so reassuring that she went away without asking further questions.

When they were alone, Dudley began to apologize to Rose for his presence.

“Nora told me to come in,” he explained. “I—I know I intruded.”

He looked so acutely wretched that Rose’s heart went out to him in tender pity.

“Sit down, dear,” she urged gently.

He dropped into that corner of the davenport which Davy had just vacated, and leaning forward buried his face in his hands.

“This is horrible,” he groaned—“horrible!”

She laid her hand comfortingly on his bowed shoulders. “Davy has told me,” she said.

He raised his head. “Didn’t you know before?” he asked.

“About father?”

“Yes.”

“I knew—I have known for years.”

“Are you going to hate me, Rose?”

“For finding out? Why, you couldn’t help that!”

What *had* Davy told her? Evidently not the one thing that Dudley supposed he had.

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"No," he echoed confusedly, "I couldn't help that."

"But you are so horrified? Dudley, don't let yourself judge him too harshly. He had his human weaknesses—but he had in many things a more than human strength. I know nothing about this—this affair which cost him his life—which took him from us and from the world that needed him. But I know that not all that has been said about him has overpraised his goodness—his greatness."

He was silent, not knowing where to begin to make his situation clear to her.

Misunderstanding his silence, she thought a new light broke upon her. She had supposed him unhappy because he felt he could not now do Lyman Innes the loving justice he had hoped to do him. Then it flashed over her that perhaps he thought less of *her*, in the light of this discovery, and did not know how to tell her.

Her cheeks burned and behind their mist of tears her eyes flashed.

"Dudley," she demanded, "is it possible that you think less of me—and of all of us—because of this discovery?"

"No!" he cried; "no! I'm not a fool. But it's this: you don't seem to understand. I've undertaken to probe into a phase of history and to try to discover the truth about it. I find that the

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leading event with which I am to deal is built out of a tissue of lies. I—I can’t perpetuate the lies.”

“You—you mean,” she gasped, her eyes fastened on him in a stare of mixed horror and incredulity, “that you want to—to publish what you’ve learned?”

“I must,” he answered desperately.

She was on her feet confronting him, blazing with fury.

“You must? Why must you? What obligation could there be strong enough to force any man to such a thing?”

“The obligation of the truth,” he returned doggedly.

“The truth! What is the truth? The prime truth about my father is that he was all he has been represented to be. If this other is true about him, it is not *THE* truth! The truth as told about him has been an inspiration to tens of thousands. You want to shatter this ideal!”

“I do not!” he cried. “I want to give him every particle of credit he’s entitled to. I have his letters—his scrapbooks. They bear witness that no man can question, to his attitude toward labor and its just demands. But I cannot repeat the lies about his death.”

“Why do you need to discuss his death?”

“Because it is the pivot of the whole affair.

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The sentiment it aroused marked the beginning of a new era in public sentiment. It—why, you know as well as I do—it started a new school of writing—a flood of sentimental literature in which some hero of the *classes* gives his life for his belief in the *masses*. A whole world of hysteria has grown out of the lies told about that death.”

“Sentiment,” she reminded him hotly, “is not always hysteria because it seems such to the cynical.”

“I am not cynical, Rose—nor unsentimental. But I tell you, untruth is unwholesome. All big literature, sacred and profane, tells the truth about men. It doesn’t try to sustain David’s spirituality by suppressing the truth about Uriah’s wife; Ulysses isn’t any less a hero because of Calypso; we don’t discredit Solomon’s wisdom because we know he was a carnal man. This isn’t any new attitude of mine; you know I’ve always written what I believed to be the truth, no matter what it has cost me. I’ve had some hard fights; but I’ve won respect for my work. I can’t go back on that record now. I can’t let my love for you, my affection for the boys, stultify me. I would do the same if it were my own father who was involved. For I know that the truth must prevail; and I hope I am too wise to try to stand against it. I explained to Davy: this isn’t going to come out to-morrow, nor next month. I

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began my investigating with the struggle your father represents because I could get the fullest detail on that most easily, and out of that detail I could pick up the threads that would lead me back into earlier struggles. I have months of research yet to do; it will be a year before this revelation gets to print. But I felt I must tell you about it—I could not accept any evidences of regard from you while I was hiding from you a discovery like that. If you feel that I have estranged myself from you, I must bear it. But I shall at least know that I have done what the truth demands.”

Rose made no effort at any time to interrupt him, but let him say his say to the bitter end.

“Dudley,” she began when he seemed waiting for her to speak, “as you say, this is no matter for haste. I want to be just—to everybody. I must think. You will, of course, keep it secret; journalistic prudence, if nothing else, would make you do that. Davy and I will talk it over. I—I’m quite sure we’ll try not to let Johnny know—not yet. There’s nothing, it seems, that we can do—except to reconcile ourselves. Wait till you hear from me. When we know how we can command ourselves, I’ll send you word.”

When he was gone she sat down in a low chair; her small hands were quite cruelly clinched; every muscle was tense with strain. She was telling

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herself that she must fight this out—she must try to think—to reason—to decide—to plan. But her mind refused her mandates. It was inert; she could not force it.

She got up presently and went to the door of her room. Davy was there—he would help her. She tried the knob gently. When she found the door locked she fainted.

A few minutes later the front doorbell rang and Nora answered it. A gentleman she did not remember ever to have seen asked for Miss Innes.

Nora heard no sound from the living-room. She had her own intuitions about the status of Dudley Prichard in the household, and she thought she understood why it was so quiet in the living-room. It was quiet in the kitchen for long stretches at a time—so quiet you could hear the ticking of the clock—on the evenings when Nora's beau came.

"I—I think Miss Innes is out," Nora said. Then, being a bad dissembler, "I'll—I'll *ask* her," she stammered, and in defiance of instructions closed the door in the gentleman's face.

The apartment was one of those with a long, narrow hall out of which most of the rooms opened. The door into the living-room was not more than three or four short paces from the front door. Nora tiptoed along the wall and knocked on the lintel.

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Receiving no answer, she ventured to speak. “Miss Rose!” she called in a loud whisper. When there was no response Nora peeked in. Finding the room empty, she called again, and louder. They were in Mr. Davy’s den, no doubt. But no answer came from there.

“I guess I told the truth,” laughed Nora to herself; “she did go out.”

She was about to return to the door to tell the caller this, when her eye—straying to Miss Rose’s door to see if there was any sign of Mr. David—caught sight of the limp figure on the floor.

She screamed; and in the same instant Bruce Norbury burst in from the hall, and Davy bounded to the door and implored to know what had happened.

“Come out, Mr. Davy; come out quick!” Nora shouted. “I think Miss Rose is dead.”

Davy flung himself against the door and it crashed open. Bruce Norbury had Rose in his arms.

“In here,” sobbed Davy; and Bruce laid her on her own bed.

“She has fainted,” he said. “Water, Davy—and brandy.”

He unfastened her collar and the top hooks of her dress. Nora fetched ice-water and Davy was there in an instant with brandy.

As soon as he saw signs of returning conscious-

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ness, Bruce stepped out of the room. Something was wrong here, evidently, when Davy was locked in Rose's room and Rose lay in a faint outside the door. He went into the living-room, far out of ear-shot, and debated within himself whether it would be more delicate for him to slip away, or to wait and seem to accept whatever tale Davy offered.

Putting himself in Davy's place, he decided to remain and reassure Davy. If he went, Davy might suffer distress over what he supposed Bruce must be thinking.

It was many minutes—perhaps twenty—before Davy came. Bruce was standing at the front windows looking across Washington Square.

Davy laid a hand on Norbury's shoulder and Norbury turned. He was startled almost out of his control by the expression of Davy's face. It was not two hours since they had sat together at luncheon; yet in that space of time Davy seemed to have aged as with years of suffering.

"Don't try to tell me anything, Dave," Norbury entreated. "I don't need to know. I am satisfied. Just forget that I was here, and I'll forget it."

"Bruce," said Davy, "if you'd *let* me talk to you I think it might keep me from going mad. I've got to get some other point of view on this than my own. I've got to, for her sake. You're

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here—perhaps you were sent. If you hadn’t come I should have been sorely tried to know whom I could talk to. Not that I haven’t many friends I trust, but—can’t we sit down, Bruce?”

As if his knees suddenly gave way, he sank into a chair.

Bruce stepped into the dining-room and fetched a glass of brandy from Davy’s liqueur cabinet. Davy swallowed it gratefully. Then he plunged bravely in.

“Bruce,” he began, “have you ever heard anything about—about my father’s death that—that wasn’t quite like the usual account of it?”

Norbury’s face showed that he had. “One hears all sorts of things about any event of great public interest,” he replied evasively.

“Would you mind telling me what you have heard?”

“Why, that there was some—that the assassin, Bardeen, fancied he had a—a different sort of a grievance than the—the one that has always been ascribed to him.”

“His—wife?”

“Yes.”

“Do—do many people—I mean, do you think many persons have heard of this?”

“I think not—it has been mentioned once or twice in my hearing, but I’ve never given it any credence—always set it down to the malice of

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those who opposed your father's attitude. I fancy most persons would do the same."

Davy told him about Prichard; about the talk with Rose, and how he had locked himself away when he heard Prichard's voice, fearing what he might do. What had transpired between Rose and Dudley he did not know. But Dudley was gone and Rose was—as Bruce saw.

The passionate anger Bruce felt against Prichard he controlled with supreme effort; his service to Davy must be to calm him and not to add fuel to his rage.

Bruce Norbury was a man of elegant leisure—"and always busy," as he was wont to add. He had an income sufficient for his needs; and as for his wants, not many of them were of a sort money can satisfy. He was born with one great gift, the gift for friendship. And it was his friendships that kept him busy.

Jim Sansome, for instance, falls ill and is ordered to Southern California. He doesn't know a soul west of the Mississippi and he is desperately afraid he may die out on that far coast. There seems to be no one who can go with him—except Bruce. So Bruce goes. In Santa Barbara they meet Phoenix Ordway whose paintings of the missions by moonlight have made him fame and fortune. Before he has been there a fortnight,

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Bruce is fathoms deep in the fascination of the missions—pictorially, historically, architecturally, and every other wise. He has a winter of deep delight, and gets on the trail of so many interesting things that he is not content until he has followed the trails into old Mexico. From there the trails lead to Spain. And on a day when Tom Berwin, at the National Arts Club, says he wants to go to Spain to make some architectural studies, and wishes he knew “an English-speaking white man who’d go along,” Bruce offers himself. Two months of the Alhambra and the cathedrals, of Toledo and Burgos and Salamanca and Seville, and Bruce finds his architectural understanding most enjoyably keen—thanks to Tom—and whetted for a sight of some good classic models with which he may compare the Gothic and see if he can recognize in himself those essentially different feelings which Tom says the classics induce. And thus and thus, Bruce Norbury. People envy him his ability to indulge himself in foreign travel—people who spend thrice as much every year to live in a hole in one of Manhattan’s tall apartment “cliffs.” He has a bit of astronomical enthusiasm, which gives him pleasure on almost every clear night. He has a simple satisfaction in knowing birds and trees and plants by name, which puts zest into his country excursions. His sympathy with many men makes him

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absorb the best of each, and his desire to give *quid pro quo* in friendship makes him give liberally out of his assorted interests in return for a share in the specific interest of the friend he is with.

"Do you know exactly what it is that Prichard has stumbled upon?" he asked Davy.

"No, he didn't say how he found out—merely that he knew."

"Have you any idea what he may have found?"

"No, not the least."

"Would it be an impertinence if I asked you just what you know, and who told you?"

"I overheard it. My father's body was in the library of the Executive Mansion, after it was coffined and before it was taken to the Capitol to lie in state. I was in there, alone, and I heard some men coming. I had been crying passionately, and I didn't want to have to talk to any one, so I hid. My father's private secretary, Perkins, came in, and two or three State officials; I think one was the Secretary of State and one was the Attorney-General. They were discussing the plans for the lying-in-state. 'I hope,' one of them said to Perkins, 'there's no chance of that woman turning up and making a scene over the body.' Perkins answered that he did not think so; that she wasn't that kind of a woman. 'Well,' the other man went on, 'it would be a pretty

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howdy-do if, after all the trouble we've gone to to keep this thing hushed up, she should turn hysterical, or want to advertise herself, and give it all away. I think something ought to be done to guard against any such possibility. Suppose she's one of the many who are crazy for newspaper notoriety or to go on the stage! Suppose she has letters; she ought to be made to give them up. Then if her vanity leads her to say she is the woman on whose account the Governor was murdered, she'll have nothing to show in evidence. I tell you, I know that type of woman. Having no reputation to lose, they don't care how they tear down the reputations of others, dead or alive, to feed their abominable vanity.' Then Perkins said something more about her being a different kind of woman. But nothing mattered to me then. It was—awful, Bruce! Imagine a boy of fifteen, broken-hearted over his father's tragic death, hearing such a hideous account of that death—that it was not martyrdom, but—but retribution! I was too young to know much of the world, to know how to make any allowances for the human weaknesses of a big, good man. I thought my father, whom I had adored, had been a hypocrite! Imagine me, through all the panegyric of the days that followed, keeping my heart-breaking knowledge to myself! Imagine the years of my brooding adolescence, when I fought that

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thing like a demon and couldn't ask counsel of a soul. By and by, I came to understand; and as I did, I think I loved my father more passionately than—than I could have done if I had never known. But until to-day I never knew that Rose knew—or that my mother had known; I don't know now if Johnny does."

"Do you know how Rose found out?"

Davy winced. "Yes," he said; "my mother told her. It was—it was a—a dreadful thing to do, but mother said she had to have some one to talk to about it. She—the shock had quite undone her. The fact is, Bruce, that my mother, while an excellent, good woman—in many ways—was not in any way, hardly, the woman to be my father's wife. All the things she could do for a man were not the things he cared about. All the things he wanted from a woman were the things she did not know how to give. I don't know anything about that other woman; but as I've come to realize what the loneliness of his life must have been—what agony he must have endured that summer of the strike—I find myself hoping that he got something that was truly satisfying from that woman for whom he gave his life. I hope this isn't shockingly wrong in me, or shocking disrespectful to my poor mother——"

"I don't think it is either," Bruce reassured him. "Have you any idea how your mother

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found out about the other woman? You see, I’m just trying to learn if there is any existing evidence, or if it’s all a matter of hearsay. If Prichard has nothing to quote but some vague whisperings, he’ll hardly dare offer them against the belief that has been unchallenged for fifteen years.”

Davy’s brow knitted; he was thinking intensely. “That’s right,” he said; “I hadn’t realized that. I don’t know what Dudley has—but I dare say there’ll be some way to find out. And Rose didn’t say how mother learned what she knew—wait a minute! I’ll ask her.”

“Maybe”—Bruce laid a detaining hand on Davy’s arm—“maybe we ought not to bother her—about this—right now.”

Davy shook himself gently free. “What do you suppose she’s doing?” he reminded. “Going over and over and over this in her own mind. She knows you are here—I told her. And I asked her if she had any objection to my making a confidant of you, and she said no.”

He was gone for several minutes, during which, Bruce was sure, he was giving Rose every consoling aspect that the case had taken on in talking it over with a friend.

When Davy came back his face was a study—in mingled relief and humiliation.

“It seems,” he began, and the shame he suffered made him flush hotly, “that there was no—

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no actual evidence presented to my mother. She—she got her intimation of the truth from—an anonymous letter.”

Bruce looked away from Davy, and out of the window, trying to think of something that could be said.

“I—I— Don’t think too hard of her,” Davy begged. “But mother was—was that kind of a woman. Some of it was in her blood, I know—from generations back. And some of it was in her training. In fact, I don’t think she had any idea how—how heinous it was to believe an anonymous letter that besmirched the memory of her husband. I suppose she made what furtive efforts she could to prove its truth. But what those efforts were, I don’t know. My poor mother was not a judicious woman, Bruce. I—I don’t know what—what written evidence she may have put into circulation in her—her efforts to learn the truth.”

Bruce repressed an exclamation of dismay. “If you’ll allow me, Davy,” he offered, “I’ll try to find out all I can for you. I can go about it as you direct, but with less embarrassment than you would feel in pursuing the investigation.”

Davy wrung Norbury’s hand with a fervor of grateful acceptance he could not otherwise express.

“Now, first of all,” Bruce began, “who is there, that you know, who knew your father—some one you

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could trust me to go to ? We want to learn, if we can, how generally these whisperings have got around.”

Davy thought for a minute. “There’s Mr. Penhallow,” he suggested. “He knew both my parents intimately. I’d be glad to know what he thinks. And I trust him absolutely. Ansel Rodman didn’t know my father, but he knew many of my father’s friends. And at the time of father’s death, Rodman was in a position to hear anything that was talked over among writing men—the superior journalists, editors, and so on—you know; the kind of talk you and I hear about public occurrences to-day—the under side of the story that doesn’t get into print. Then there’s Ballard Creighton—a man we’ve just met. He’s an actor now; he was a laborer then, and in that strike. He’d know if anything ever got out among the working men who revere my father’s memory so. You know Rodman well. Penhallow you have met, I’m sure. Creighton I’ll introduce you to. Rodman and Creighton are *big* men. I’m not afraid of their judgment on any man—least of all on my father, whose own bigness they know how to comprehend. And Penhallow is *delicate*. He knows furniture better than he knows men. But his every instinct is *fine*, and he’s true blue.”

“That’s splendid! Now we’ll lay a few counter-mines for Mr. Dudley Prichard.”

CHAPTER XIII

THE WEAK AND THE STRONG

WHEN the Bristows came to New York and looked for a place to live, they were as ignorant as most newcomers to the city about neighborhoods and their social values. Some day, one thinks, there will be a Bureau of Social Service where the newcomers may find such things out; then ladies from up-State, in New York on a shopping tour, will not innocently give their address as one of those Seventh Avenue hotels so abandoned to fast chorus ladies that the hotel name is almost like a brand; and gentlemen from Montana will not bring their families to New York "to get acquainted," and install them in a locality where "nobody" goes—or, rather, where only nobodies ever go. The sophisticated New Yorker who knows little or nothing except New York is disinclined to think respectfully of any one to whom his city is new. If you haven't been to New York before you are undeniably a "Rube"; and if you have been there and then have found it possible to live elsewhere, there must be something the matter with your intelligence. So he is

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patronizingly "difficult" to the newcomer; and, familiarity with New York being his sole standard of intelligence, he judges each man by the neighborhood where he lives. Take as an instance Seventh Avenue. You may board at Seventh Avenue and Seventeenth Street and the Manhattanite will judge that you are living in a rather nice, genteel house, in a rather nice, respectable neighborhood; perhaps he will infer that you live there because you work somewhere within walking distance; he can pretty nearly "place" you, financially and socially, if you tell him your exact number—or, rather, he will think that he can. If you live at Seventh Avenue and Twenty-seventh Street you are almost inevitably a frequent visitor—under stress—to the Tenderloin Police Court, on a charge of drunk and disorderly or of violating the tenement-house act; if at Seventh Avenue and Thirty-seventh, you belong, presumably, somewhere in the social organization of show girls to whom salary is a mere bagatelle; if at Seventh Avenue and Forty-seventh Street, you probably have affiliation with some of the small businesses Long Acre Square supports; if at Seventh Avenue and Fifty-seventh Street, you may be an artist—for in them that vicinity abounds. And so on.

The Bristows wanted to be near the theatres; for there, they knew, Emily must look for work. The house where they found a room within their

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means and tolerable for living in was in a block as frankly "Tenderloin" as any in the theatre district. But they were unaware of this; and in their particular case it made very little difference. For the house itself was respectably kept, and as the Bristows did not expect to cultivate any calling acquaintance, it served them well enough.

They had the large back room on the second floor, a south room and sunny. The outlook was across back yards to other back windows; but it was rather more interesting than that which the front of the house afforded: across a narrow, uninteresting street to other house fronts depressingly alike. At the back, things happened. The house fronts suggested the superficiality of life where everybody was trying to be like everybody else. In the freedom of the rear windows and back yards, individuality ventured to assert itself; and people who watched were free to guess why, in two rooms whose occupants paid, presumably, about the same rent, the undershirt that one hung up in her window to dry was ribbed cotton—the two-for-a-quarter kind in cheap stores—and the undershirt that the other displayed was of Italian silk, pink, probable price three-fifty.

Mrs. Bristow was much in the room. When she had read books until her head ached or her eyes were strained unbearably, she could sit at her window and read life—oftentimes with a

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sense of wonder that so little of its vividness got into books.

The room had no bed—only two cots which were covered by day with “tapestry” spreads and made to look like couches. There was a bureau of golden “oak,” with varnish that inclined to get sticky, the whole thing frankly redolent of “easy payments.” A marble-topped washstand, in a wall-niche, had hot and cold running water. The woodwork of the room was “grained” in imitation of walnut. The paper on the walls was quite dreadful, as paper on walls where the way-farer tarries is almost sure to be; but it was fairly new and clean. The fadedness of the old Brussels carpet was its one redeeming quality; Mrs. Bristow had paid out of her own pinched little purse to have a half-peck of dust sucked from the carpet by a vacuum cleaner.

For the rest, there was a Morris chair with velvet cushions which would have made Morris very, very sad; and a rocking-chair with a seat of stamped leatherette; and a writing-desk, also of the favored “golden oak,” whose varnish was no more steadfast than the bureau’s, and whose thin legs wobbled wildly when any one so grossly mistook its purpose as to try to write on it. Lastly, there was a small table on which Mrs. Bristow kept the books sent her for review. She often thought amusedly of that table and its ever-chang-

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ing occupants. How many kinds they were! And how inevitable seemed their moving on! There was seldom one that made itself at home in this room. And yet, how many starved lives were lived in rooms like this!

Since that Sunday evening at the Inneses', Mrs. Bristow had left her room scarcely at all. She was in a state of health far from rugged, and the shocks she had nerved herself to withstand had made a deep drain upon her store of energy. She had seemed to age, in those two weeks, perceptibly.

Olivia was still a pretty woman. At fifty, her skin was still soft and the flesh beneath it firm. Her baby-fine brown hair was not yet touched with gray. Her eyes seemed to grow bigger and more brightly shining with every year of life she lived. But she no longer wore collarless blouses—though they were in fashion again—and the throat her “boned” lace collars hid had lost its girlish loveliness. Her cheeks still bloomed pink, though, when she was excited; and her zest for life was keen. She no longer wanted to live much life, but she was unwearied in her eagerness to watch life—to see it coil its strange tangles and unfold its inevitable rewards. She hoped that personally she was done with life; she felt that she was, except in so far as she had yet to live through Emily. But her interest in the

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world was so great that she often said she would like to be a kind of Perpetual Intelligence, so she might never have to go away without knowing the end of the serial stories that were always unfolding themselves about her.

When she had taken her daughter by the hand and led her away from all they knew, into exile, she made the resolve that, in so far as it was possible for a mother to be everything in the world to a child, she would be that to Constance, who was henceforth to be called by her first given name, Emily. And she had been so unswervingly true to this purpose that she had neglected no possible way by which she might catch all the lights of life and reflect them, prismatically, to Emily. Emily would never know what companionship she had enjoyed until she had tried to find its like in another.

During these last two weeks, however, Olivia had felt piteously unequal to her struggle. A sense as of something impending was always with her. She was torn between wanting to keep away from the Inneses and wanting to go to them. She felt that she must leave town, and yet she knew it would be unbearable now to go away—not to know what was happening among these children whose destiny was so linked with hers. She was fearful of what that man Prichard might uncover. And yet, if she were to flee, what questioning

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might it not excite! Emily was happy here, and she felt sure that even if Dudley Prichard found out anything, no one could ever connect them with the Bardeens who had vanished so mysteriously immediately after the tragedy.

But in the ceaseless questioning and cross-questioning that went on in her mind, by day and by night, these two weeks, she seemed to be wearing herself out.

Emily was much absorbed in other things, but not so much so that her mother's evident weariness and weakness failed to give her concern.

"You're sticking too close to those miserable books," Emily declared. "For the pittance you get from them, it isn't worth while."

But Olivia said she enjoyed reading the books—was glad to have something to do.

"Then you're worrying about that Prichard business."

In Emily's mind this was a grievance, and her tone said as much—made it, in fact, an accusation. She was particularly desirous of forgetting Johnny Innes's paternity, and her own. And she was fretful when anything served to remind her that her mother could not forget.

Like most children who have been made the centre and circumference of the world by a parent so lavishly able to give love as Olivia was, Emily was appreciably the worse off. It is quite as

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wholesome to make children earn love as it is to make them earn money—and as much more necessary as love is more necessary than money. But the most doting parents seem to overlook this. There is often, no doubt, a touch of divinity in the parental love that goes out most yearningly to the least worthy child; but there is often a deal of human selfishness in it, too. It may be selfish pride and unwillingness to see how sadly they have failed as parents; it may be sloth; or it may be egotism of the kind that prides itself on how much it can give and not on how much it can make a weaker soul worthy to receive. There has been a lot of maudlin sentiment extant about some relationships the simple truth about which is that they are selfish to the core. Most relationships in which one person grows steadily stronger and more seemingly unselfish, and the other grows steadily more dependent and less dependable, are proper subjects for inquiry; there's something the matter with the stronger part of the relationship. As has been profoundly observed, "Legs was made to stand on." It is a frustration of destiny when any one pair of legs insists on doing the standing for two pairs.

Olivia had developed herself magnificently; but she had done so at the expense of her child. She was too keen a woman not to have her flashes of realization in which this fact was plain to her;

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and she meant to do better. But the habit of abnegation is a hard one to shake off; the process of "unspoiling" is difficult to begin. It was particularly hard for Olivia, because whenever she tried to harden her heart against Emily's selfishness, she remembered how much Emily had had to suffer from *her* selfishness of long ago. Out of a lifetime of self-sacrifice and struggle, Olivia often bitterly reflected, she had one page of self-indulgence and yielding. But from that brief selfishness what ruin had been wrought!

Emily did not tell her mother how often she had engagements with Johnny Innes. She said—to her accusing other self—that every mention of Johnny in any connection with herself caused her mother to "worry"; and she ought not to be worried.

Making daytime engagements was easy enough. Emily had only to say she was called for rehearsal, or that she was going with one of the girls of the company to luncheon or to shop or to visit a friend. Evenings after the theatre, when Johnny wanted her—as he so frequently did—to go out with him for a bite of supper, it was more difficult. Now and then it would do to say that some friends of Pauline Bartlett's or of Lucy Truman's had invited several of the girls out, Emily among them. But that would not do duty oftener than semi-occasionally. And Olivia always expected

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some kind of an explanation. She was not trying to make her girl lead a conventual life, but she was trying to make Emily feel that giving her mother her confidence about what she was doing would be a safeguard to her against doing things she wouldn't like to tell. Emily couldn't bring her acquaintances home for her mother to see. The landlady's rules were strictly against men callers being taken to rooms even when a mother was chaperoning; the Tenderloin was full of mothers whose chaperonage of their daughters' vice was not only complacent but eager. And Emily wouldn't let any of the girls see where she lived; for most of them had homes in New York—their parents' homes or some attractive little apartment nook they shared with another bachelor maid—and while she had to admit that she was boarding, she did not feel obliged to let any one know just how cheaply she was doing it. Emily was a thorough exponent of the spirit which makes many in her profession, and in others, hopelessly "cheap," and others as hopelessly reckless. She was ashamed to be known for what she was—a girl new-come from the antipodes, who was struggling to get a foothold in the theatre world. She had "talked big" about what she was in New Zealand. She didn't want any one to know how impressed she was with having got into this excellent company. She was playing her small

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part with an air of condescension, as if she did it merely to accommodate the manager. The atmosphere in which—or in despite of which—some of the loveliest girls in the land have grown to dignity and sweetness difficult to surpass was a bad atmosphere for Emily. The weak and unworthy things in her flourished in that Rialto air, and grew like Jonah's gourd; the better things in her languished. It would have been precisely the same had Emily been a "saleslady"; she would have sold gloves or handkerchiefs with the same air of condescension to the public, would have posed among the other girls in the same kind of light—not as one who must earn her own bread, make her own place in the world, but as one who was whiling away time for fun and feathers.

Olivia knew comparatively little of this. The exigencies which made it impossible for her to share Emily's social life made it inevitable that she should be almost profoundly ignorant of the real Emily. The parent who habitually sees a child among his superiors, sees very little of the child. It is what the child shows among his peers and his inferiors that tells the tale.

If Olivia had known that the clandestine habit was getting its grip upon Emily, she would have been spurred to superhuman effort to break it. But she did not know.

Late in the week that had begun with the dis-

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covery of Catherine and gone on to the distressful revelations of Prichard, Rose went up to see the Bristows.

"I was afraid you hadn't been well," she said. Unmistakably Olivia had not been.

Mrs. Bristow protested that her indisposition was nothing to be taken account of. "I don't go out enough," she admitted. "I must mend my slothful ways."

"Begin now," Rose entreated. "Come out with me. It takes real moral energy to make one's self go out alone just for exercise. I know—because I don't do it! But let's go somewhere together—you take me and I'll take you. We both need it."

Mrs. Bristow smiled gratefully at her. "I think 'let's' is one of the delightfulest words in the language," she declared. "'Let's'!—I love it!"

"So do I," Rose agreed. "Now, 'let's' see. I want to take you somewhere that you haven't been."

"That will be easy. I have been hardly anywhere at all."

The eagerness of her was pathetic to Rose; it bespoke a hungriness she thought that she could understand.

It was early in the afternoon, a brilliant Indian-summer day, more characteristic of the Novem-

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bers we know than are "the melancholy days" which the poet calls "the saddest of the year."

Rose thought intently for a few moments. "I wonder what you would like best to do," she speculated. "Would you like to go up, on top of a Fifth Avenue motor bus, to Central Park, and go into the Metropolitan Museum for a while and look at some pictures, then come out and browse around in the park? Or would you like to go, say up to Fordham, and see the Poe cottage and something of the tremendous work of bringing the new water supply into New York? There's a dear, quaint old church there and a churchyard where the low, unkempt graves will be strewn with russet fallen leaves. Or would you like to go to call on some artist friends of ours who have charming studios? They have log fires and ingle-nooks, and they'll brew us some excellent tea, with the aid of a samovar. Perhaps that is nicer to leave for a wintry afternoon when there's no pleasure to be had out-of-doors. Maybe you'd like to 'prowl,' as I call it, on the lower East Side! Maybe you'd like to go down to the Battery and among some of the old Revolutionary haunts, and take a long ferry ride—there's a beautiful long one that goes to Staten Island! New York of to-day doesn't half appreciate the Battery. And we could go to Fraunce's Tavern—Washington's head-quarters—to dine. Or——"

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"Oh, please!" Olivia begged, "don't suggest another thing. I'm bewildered now to know how to choose. Indeed, I decline to try."

"When must you be back?" Rose asked. "I mean: how early do you dine? And do you *ever* leave Miss Emily to dine alone?"

"Emily is dining out to-night," Mrs. Bristow answered. "A girl in the company—Lucy Truman—has asked her to dine at her apartment. She and a girl who is a clever fashion artist live together, Emily says, and have a fascinating little place."

"That's fine," cried Rose—meaning not Lucy's domestic arrangement, but the fact that Mrs. Bristow was free. "Johnny is dining out, and I'll call up Davy and ask him to meet us somewhere for dinner. Maybe he can bring some one with him whom you'd like to meet—Mr. Rodman, perhaps."

She 'phoned to Davy from the first drug store they came to.

"Where shall I meet you?" Davy asked.

"Wherever you say. Mrs. Bristow can't choose, because all the places are strange to her. And I don't care, because they are all familiar to me."

Davy pondered. "I wish I knew—Lafayette, Cecchina's, Roversi's, Guffanti's, Moquin's, Beaux-Arts. Do you suppose she'd care for Martin's?"

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"No, not so much as some of the others. Let's say Guffanti's."

"All right. Make it as near six as you can. After six-thirty there's never anything—we'd have to wait and wait."

"We'll be there."

They went to Fordham; and the hours outdoors, in the warm sunshine, did both of them a world of good—physical good and spiritual good, for in the open they discovered their points of kinship rapidly. They found that they had both heard the same bird sing, albeit not in the same wood.

The early dusk was upon them when they turned their faces cityward. They returned by the Third Avenue "L" rather than go into the noisy Subway. There is much to be seen on a ride in from Fordham on a Third Avenue "L"; there is nothing to be seen in the Subway.

At Twenty-eighth Street they got off and took the little antiquated horse-car that jingles across town, east on Twenty-eighth Street and west on Twenty-ninth. This they did partly because they were tired after their hours of tramping and partly for the novelty of the experience—which was not quite so rich in contrasts, however, as when one comes up out of the roar of the "tube," where steel express trains flash through space almost

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like projectiles from a gun, and continues his journey in one of these bobbing little cars left over from a transportation régime now almost as ancient as that of the palanquin.

Their destination was Seventh Avenue near Twenty-sixth Street. They debarked from their vehicle at Twenty-ninth Street and walked down the avenue.

An old woman, white-headed, sat on the curbstone and wept dejectedly; she was maudlin drunk. A young woman, hardly out of her early girlhood, but frightfully debauched and not far from Potter's Field, was being roughly handled by a policeman; she was resisting arrest for soliciting on the street. Evil-looking loafers lounged about the doorways of cheap groggeries. Unkempt women and children came and went, in and out of dingy shops and dark entrances to tenements.

Just below Twenty-sixth Street several taxicabs and private motors stood, waiting. Two or three others, within a minute, drew up at a door, were emptied of well-dressed people, and hurried away.

In this wilderness of squalor and vice an Italian kept a little hotel. He had once been a saloon-keeper who served a few kinds of food at his saloon tables: soup, whose fragrant memory persisted; spaghetti that was like no other spaghetti anywhere; chicken—oh! quite indescribable, that

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chicken. A few of the newspaper boys patronized the saloon; they are good advertisers. From lip to lip passed the word of that food which was so cheap, so excellent. Business grew. The little low barroom was extended; the store next door was rented, and a wide doorway broken through; the back yards were encroached upon. To pay for all this the prices of food were doubled, but still they were cheap enough. The bar continued, but a wholesale liquor business evolved. The overflow of diners went upstairs, and a hotel eventuated.

All classes went there; the young clerk allowing himself a weekly "spread"; working women, in pairs or trios or quartettes, out for a little jollification; married folk celebrating an anniversary; newspaper people and their friends; foreigners in great numbers and of many sorts; jurists and sporting gentry; musicians and feather importers; salesmen showing their country customers the town, and women whom the town had nothing to show.

Davy was waiting for them in the narrow hallway inside the entrance; Ansel Rodman was with him. They had engaged a table, placed advantageously for seeing.

Mrs. Bristow was as excited as a child; her cheeks were flushed a charming pink and her eyes were as bright as stars.

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She was entranced with looking. The busy, busy bar was close by, and she could watch the deft haste of the bartenders as they mixed cocktails and gin rickeys and other American drinks. The Italian orchestra was in excellent view; and when the tenor got up to sing "Ciribirribino" he seemed to be singing right at her. She could see the people coming in, too. The rooms filled rapidly, and soon the late comers had either to turn disappointedly away or to wait until a table was vacated.

They led Ansel Rodman into speculation about persons sitting near them. His perceptions were so keen, his synthetic powers were so great, that he could evolve the most minutely particularized probabilities about individuals or couples.

When, fearing to weary him, they had ceased inciting him to do this, and the talk had flowed into other channels than those suggested by their neighbors, some one asked him a question to answer which he had to recall himself sharply from an obvious wandering.

"I beg pardon," he said. "I was watching a girl in the next room. I think none of you can see her—but I can. I can't see who she's with, and I was trying to guess. That's fun, too, when you can see one party only of what is evidently a duo. It's a man who's with her. And he isn't her father or her brother or her husband or her

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cousin or her uncle or—her father-confessor. He's young—the expression in her face is not the expression girls wear when trying to make old men believe they like them. She's in love with the man across the table from her. And she—yes, she knows that he's in love with her. Ah, wait! she's getting up; here they come!”

They came. The girl was Emily Bristow and the man with her was Johnny Innes.

Only Rose was aware of any embarrassment in the situation for Emily and Mrs. Bristow. But Rodman was distressed. He could see that such a relationship as he had surmised between the girl and the young man was by no means an accepted fact in the family of either of them; and he was grieved to have forced a revelation.

Johnny and Emily could not linger long; they had just a comfortable margin of time in which to get to the theatre. When they were gone, nothing was said which showed any remembrance of Rodman's speculations about them. But he knew the remembrance persisted, and he cursed himself inwardly for a clumsy old fool.

The remainder of their dinner was eaten under a constraint each of them strove to break and each of them made worse by his striving.

Rodman suggested taking Mrs. Bristow on a tour of some of the foreigners' theatres in New

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York, but she said she was afraid to undertake any more sight-seeing then.

"This is the first time I have been out of the house in nearly two weeks," she explained, "and I know I must not be greedy. But oh! I *hope* you'll give me that opportunity some other time. You don't know what Spartan resolution is required to say no."

"There is no occasion for Spartan suffering," he answered her. "I am always doddering around such places—more or less—and it is my happiness when I can find some one who cares to go with me. So you have only to say one little word whenever you want to go."

They left her at her door, and Rose's thoughts went with her up to the cheerless back room.

CHAPTER XIV

"JACK THE GIANT-KILLER"

IMMEDIATELY that she and Johnny had got outside, Emily began to cry.

Johnny was dumfounded. He knew that Emily did not always tell her mother about their engagements, but she had explained to him that that was because her mother would wonder, naturally, why they did not ask her, too. "We have been all in all to each other for so long," she said, "that mother can't get used to any other way. And of course it's hard for her when I go out to have a good time, because she is left all alone. If some one asks me whom she doesn't know, she's just as lonely, but she doesn't feel 'left out.' But if she thought I was leaving her so much to be with you she wouldn't understand why she wasn't asked, too."

"Good gracious!" Johnny had cried when this was unfolded to him; "mothers must be reasonable. They had their day; they should be willing to let their daughters have a day, too."

"Mother didn't have much of a 'day,'" Emily had rejoined. "Her girlhood was anxious and

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hard-working. She says the only youth she ever had is what she's had with me.”

Johnny was sorry. He liked Mrs. Bristow; but three-cornered parties are no parties at all. He didn't care by what evasions of the truth Emily salved her mother's feelings—just so she *got there*.

But he couldn't understand why she should be so agitated now.

“Your mother was having a good time,” he reminded Emily when they had got a taxi and were speeding north. “She won't care if you were having a good time, too.”

“But I had told her a lie,” Emily sobbed, “and she—she won't believe what I tell her any more.”

“Oh, well!” Johnny expostulated. “Tell the truth, then. Why shouldn't you go out to dine with me? What's there about me to make an offense of it?”

Emily was silent in her corner of the cab. She was thinking hard—trying to weigh the probabilities if she told the truth. But she was afraid to venture. It might mean that Johnny would never speak to her again.

“Of course,” said Johnny haughtily, from *his* corner of the cab, “if you are ashamed to——”

“I'm not!” she cried, clutching his sleeve entreatingly.

Johnny looked out the window. They were at Thirty-fourth Street. In a minute or two they

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would have reached the corner of Seventh Avenue and Fortieth Street, where he had told the driver to stop—to avoid gossip he never drove up to the stage door in a cab with Emily, but got out a block away and strolled in on foot several minutes after she had disappeared into her dressing-room. He would have time for no more than a sentence or two now.

“Wait for me to-night,” he said.

“I can’t be late going home.”

Johnny made no reply. As he admitted, when taxed with using his silence to coerce, “My pauses are the best thing I do.”

The cab stopped and Johnny sprang out. He thrust a dollar into the driver’s hand and started away.

“I’ll be there!” Emily cried imploringly.

But if he had heard her, he gave no sign.

The stage door was on Forty-first Street. Emily halted the cab as it turned the corner westward from Seventh Avenue.

“I’ll get out here,” she said.

The driver understood.

She loitered, thinking Johnny would come along; but he didn’t. She stood before the mail rack much longer than was necessary to see that there was nothing in “B.” Then she climbed the steep spiral stairs to her dressing-room.

The cast was large and Emily was an unimpor-

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tant member of it; so she had three flights of the iron steps to climb.

The girl who shared the room with her was there. Emily hated this girl to-night. She was Lucy Truman.

Lucy was reading a letter when Emily came in. She looked up from it just long enough to say “Good-evening.”

Emily murmured a return courtesy. She wished Lucy had a dozen letters—anything to keep her absorbed so Emily would not have to talk to her.

But Lucy had only the one.

“This’s from that friend I’ve told you about, who is playing in London,” she announced presently.

“Is it?” said Emily uninterestedly.

“She says,” Lucy went on, “that she doesn’t see how she can ever bear to come back here, even though the salaries are so much better. Over there the professional people have such a grand time socially.”

“Do they?”

Lucy looked over her shoulder at Emily, whose face she could see in the mirror above her make-up shelf.

“Why, you’ve told me how it is in Australia and New Zealand,” she reminded. “You said that English people——”

Emily was fumbling petulantly among the articles on her shelf.

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"I wish I knew who touches my things after I cover them up!" she mumbled.

Lucy knew the signs of irritation. She was a gentle girl, with the strongest kind of aversion to anything that savored of a dressing-room row. So she went back to the reading of her letter as if she had not heard Emily's exclamation.

When she had finished reading it she put it in her hand-bag and went quietly about her business. She could see that Emily was feeling bad about something; the only sympathy she could offer was to be as "nonexistent" as possible, and to seem to be keeping quiet not because she noticed anything unusual in Emily, but because she was herself preoccupied.

Emily was really suffering. She thought Johnny Innes was disgusted with her for her cowardice about admitting their engagements. That a man truly in love with her would continue to love her in spite of faults far greater than this, she knew—as well as a girl in love can be said to know anything. But she was not sure that Johnny loved her—only that she wanted him to, and that she was in a passion of pain lest something like this intervene to separate them before she had won his love.

And Johnny was one of the men who can make women sue. Perhaps all men can; but if they can, some don't. Johnny did. He got his own

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way in the world—largely, with men; altogether, with women. He knew exactly how to go about it.

Emily was in feverish haste to get downstairs where she might encounter him. And she was praying that she and Lucy might be spared any calls from the occupants of near-by dressing-rooms.

But no! Marie Harmon must needs come in to show the proofs of her new photographs and have them each discussed in minute detail. And Anna Leighton must tell Lucy how grateful she was for sending her to that scalp specialist—“She said it was something awful, the condition my hair had got into from the wrong kind of treatment; that naturally I ought to have perfectly beautiful hair, and——”

Emily couldn't flaunt her “grouch” to the whole company. She had to make some sort of a pretense about caring whether Marie's pictures did her justice and whether Anna's hair was bad or good. But as soon as her dress was hooked she made her escape. “I must take something down to Miss Everz,” she said, excusing herself.

Miss Everz was an elderly woman of the company. Her dressing-room was down nearer stage-level. Emily had never been known to do more than exchange greetings with Miss Everz.

“What's up?” Marie asked Lucy when Emily was gone.

“Nothing,” Lucy answered. “Emily seems a

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little worried about something. I guess we all are, some of the time."

"I saw her get out of a taxi—up the street—to-night," Anna remarked. "I can't afford cabs on my salary—and I get more than she does. But if I *could* afford them I wouldn't get out up the street."

The other girls both turned on her sharply.

"Anna!" cried Marie Harmon. "For Heaven's sake, don't talk like a chorus girl."

Lucy looked her protest, but said nothing.

"Well, pardon *me!*" Anna sneered, and took herself off in a rage against the girl who was the unwitting cause of her discomfiture.

Emily was "on" in the first scene; so was Johnny. It was not unlikely that he would be ready a minute or two before the act was called; if he were repentant or anxious he would almost certainly be where he could snatch a word with her before they went on. Emily felt that she could not bear her agony of suspense "through a whole act." She devoutly hoped that Johnny felt the same way. But Johnny didn't. He knew Emily, and he knew his little game.

He knew Emily was looking for him. He could have guessed it, but he didn't need to—he could see her. His dressing-room was on the opposite side of the stage and one flight up. He had it alone, being the "juvenile lead." As soon

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as he was dressed he opened the door. Emily, if she looked up, could see him sitting there reading his letters. He, if he looked down, could see her standing on the stage, back of the “set,” waiting to be seen.

Johnny had hoped she wouldn't be there. They always came! There wasn't a girl in the world, he was beginning to believe, who could make the game of love interesting—except to a dull man! The girls were willing enough to plague some fellows. Davy was the kind of man a girl teases and enjoys teasing. But Johnny could never find one that wasn't “dead easy.” He was getting bored. Emily had fought interestingly shy of him at first. Then, when he had broken that shyness down, it was often a little difficult to persuade her to dine or sup with him, because of her reluctance to tell her mother. Tonight he actually had hopes of something to “buck against.” But no!

He waited until the act was called, then ran hurriedly down at the last moment. Emily was standing in her entrance waiting to go on a moment after the curtain rose. He made the same entrance almost immediately after her.

She gave him an imploring look which he pretended not to see. He nodded a polite “good-evening” to the three ladies—Miss Everz, Lucy, and Emily—who were standing there together.

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The curtain was up; nothing but nods and smiles and the most suppressed whispers was possible.

When Johnny made his first exit he was "off" for a matter of five minutes. Emily's exit was earlier and she did not go on again except for the first curtain call. But as her dressing-room was so high up, she usually stood on the stage until the act was over. She was there to-night as usual when Johnny came off. To ignore her would be too pointed. There were a dozen stage-hands—electric-light men and scene-shifters—who had seen Johnny, night after night, talking with Emily through that wait. He was too thoroughly a gentleman to give them reason to suppose that he and Miss Bristow were quarrelling; he wouldn't allow a stage-hand to infer that degree of intimacy where a quarrel was possible. He nodded to Emily when he came off and beckoned to Lucy Truman.

"I must tell you something," he whispered to them both, and went on to repeat some little bit of behind-the-scenes news which might be supposed to interest them. He kept Lucy there until his cue came.

Emily was near crying. She thought she understood: it was to be like this henceforth!

In the second act she was not "on" at all; there was no possible excuse for her being on the stage, because even the part she under-studied

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was not in the second act. Neither was Lucy on; and Emily dreaded the “wait.” But Lucy had a letter to write—this was an opportunity frequently embraced for correspondence. Emily wrote, too. She wrote a long letter and a short one. They were both to John Innes. The short one was for personal delivery to him during the performance, if she got a chance. The long one was to be sent to him by messenger immediately after the performance if she found it impossible to have a talk with him before. She could be pretty sure he had no engagement or he would not have asked her to wait. He would probably not go home because he did not know whether “the folks” would be there or not. He would go to The Lambs, she felt almost sure.

She put the long letter, in a sealed envelope, in her hand-bag. The short note she stuck in her dress. She was “on” at the beginning of the third act—which was the last. Johnny did not come on until the act was about five minutes under way. He was not in sight before the curtain rose. Emily was sure now that it was to be “like this” ever after. She couldn’t bear it, she knew. There was one little moment on which she pinned her hope of getting that note to him: it was in the very brief time between his entrance upon the scene and her exit. He was supposed to say something to her on the side while the principals

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were talking. There were, however, other people who were in the scene but not actively of it. They were supposed to be listening to what was being said in the scene; but some of them were not so intently listening that Emily could be sure they would not see her slip Johnny a note or hear what she might whisper to him.

As the moment approached she became nervous. She was afraid to try the note for fear she might drop it. The cue came; Johnny crossed to her. She was desperate. Her pantomime required that she wait for him to speak—or to act as if speaking. She waited. When he spoke it was the little meaningless line used at rehearsal to “cover” the pantomime. He had not used it in several weeks. It was one of his pleasures to think up a different line to say to her at each performance—sometimes a charming line, sometimes, when he was in teasing mood, a line most difficult for her to reply to with the required pantomime. Her tears all but started when he repeated the “stock” line. But she held them back. Her demeanor was supposed to be coyly coquettish. She had to suggest that she had said: “Oh, Mr. Beckwith!” in a kind of diffident, “dare-you-to” way. Instead, she whispered imploringly: “I *must* see you!” Then she laughed and was gone.

She waited on the stage for the act to end. Johnny was on until almost the final scene. He

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came off with the ingenue whom he did not like but who was supposed to be much in love with him, chatting gayly, if in whispers.

“That was immense—the way you brought in that bit of business to-night,” Emily heard him say. They were discussing the scene they had just played.

“That ‘cross’ always bothered me,” the ingenue answered, looking very pleased. “I’ve felt there was something wrong about it, but I couldn’t tell what—it made me feel self-conscious every time I did it. And I thought it bothered you.”

“It did,” Johnny assented. “That was an inspiration—that bit of business.”

She beamed. “I am so glad. I asked Mr. Power if I might try it, and he said ‘Go ahead.’” (Mr. Power was the stage-manager.)

Emily stood waiting for a sign from Johnny that he had heard her plea.

He nodded at her; his expression said “Yes.” She hurried up the steep stairs to make her change into street clothes. Johnny was a quick dresser.

She was in obviously better spirits as she dressed. Lucy noted the change, but was too tactful to appear to notice it.

“Anna Leighton glared at me just now as if she’d like to bite me,” Emily declared, rubbing vigorously at her cream-smeared face with a rough towel. “I wonder what I’ve done to her?”

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"Nothing, I dare say," Lucy answered. "She probably felt grouchy at Mr. Power or somebody, and you were the first person who came in her way—so you got it. Things often happen that way. I try to remember it, when I'm inclined to think somebody is out of sorts with me."

"Oh, well!" returned Emily, dabbing powder on her face and neck with gay abandon. "Not that it matters to *me* who she has a grouch on!"

She hurried into her clothes and away. The stage was cleared when she got downstairs, and dark. She could see across it to Johnny's dressing-room, where the light was still burning. She passed briskly through the little group of stage-hands lingering about the stage door, and went along Forty-first Street toward Seventh Avenue.

Times Square was a jam of people and vehicles. Broadway cars and Seventh Avenue cars and Forty-second Street cross-town cars jerked along a few feet at a time as the policemen whistled signals to stop or to go ahead. Motors whizzed around the many corners at perilous speed. The human streams flowed in six directions. Two-score theatres had emptied into this square within ten or fifteen minutes. A score or more of restaurants were receiving hundreds of these people; others were making for Subway entrances, for street cars, or were dashing away in swift cabs. Lights blazed everywhere. Women in filmy

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gowns, lifted high to display gauzy silk stockings and high-heeled slippers with glittering buckles, picked their way across wind-swept streets. Shimmering satin capes, fluttering ostrich plumes and paradise feathers, flashing pins and ornaments in elaborately coifed hair, breath of orchids and violets and lilies of the valley—all these are of the scene in Times Square between ten-forty-five and eleven o'clock any night when the theatres are open. The thousands of soberly attired folk—women in tailored suits and Sunday hats; men in business clothes—hastening to distant homes that there may be a sufficient night's rest before to-morrow's work, play little part in the comedy of Times Square except with the traffic squad. It doesn't matter where they go, or what they may have thought of the play. Presumably their chief interest in coming is to see the gay birds of paradise whom, inevitably, they envy desperately. Or thus—in effect—Times Square thinks of them. Only now and then a man moves among them with the touchstone of understanding—a man like Ansel Rodman—and knows which of the dull-plumaged ones are envious and which are tempted and which are glad to be of a world where labor is joy and where pleasure comes without having to be pursued.

Emily was envious, but not actually tempted. Her ideals lay within the zone of Irish lace and

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willow plumes and supper at the Knickerbocker. Her mother's wistfulness had never been of that sort, but Emily's was—distinctively. She was temporarily safeguarded, however, by her fondness for Johnny. Even now, as she crossed the square, she was telling herself how empty the world would be to her if she were the belle of one of those flashing, shimmering groups, but there were no Johnny in the world. She would rather—oh! infinitely rather—be going in her blue serge suit to keep an appointment with Johnny than be going swathed in Irish lace to sup with kings. Kings, indeed! She thought of Johnny's laughing black eyes; of his beautiful white teeth that showed to such attractiveness when he smiled; of the sweetness of expression round his mouth; of the clean-cut, high-bred look of him in every detail; and of the charm of his gayety and his tenderness. Tears blinded poor little Emily when she tried to think of the world—*her* world—without Johnny. Kings, indeed! Kings could only interest a girl who had never known Johnny.

They had a place of rendezvous—she and Johnny. It was in a drug store on Seventh Avenue just north of the square. She had been there only a few minutes to-night when she saw him crossing the street. She went out to meet him.

"Have you been waiting long?" he asked politely. "I tried to hurry."

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“Not long,” she answered; “but it seemed long. Oh, Johnny! How miserable you have made me!”

Johnny had been sure she would say just this. He wished he couldn’t be sure—but he was.

“Nonsense!” he exclaimed almost crossly.

Emily laid her hand on his arm appealingly. “You don’t understand,” she entreated. “I—if I could only tell you! But I can’t.”

This sounded interesting. “Tell me?—tell me *what?*”

“Why I have to be so—so secret about our engagements.”

Johnny stood still, assaulted by direful visions of Emily’s Australian husband, or the like.

“I think you ought to explain,” he began. “You never told me there was any reason why I shouldn’t take you out.”

“There isn’t!” she assured him promptly. Johnny was relieved and disappointed — both. “But——”

“But what?”

“That’s what I can’t tell. It’s nothing that I ever had anything to do with. But it—it has spoiled all my life and I can never get away from it.”

Johnny was beginning to grow mystified. He loved to be “scared”—just as Goitie Moiphy did when she hid around corners and waited for him to come creeping by and hiss “Scat!”

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"Spoiled your life?" he echoed.

She nodded, looking away from him, her face full of wretchedness.

"Come," he said, "this is absurd. Your life isn't spoiled, you poor baby. You've had a bad dream. You tell me about it, and when you start to tell you'll see it can't be true."

He started east in Forty-fifth Street. It was quiet through there, and if Emily decided she wanted something to eat they could go to Burns's.

"Now, what is it?" he demanded when they had got out of earshot of Times Square.

Emily began to cry. "I can't tell you," she sobbed. "You'll never speak to me again. It's awful. It's been hanging over me like—like that sword—you know. I knew it would happen. But I tried to be happy while I could."

Johnny's first fear returned.

"Emily," he asked, "are you married?"

Emily gasped. "No; oh, no!" she cried. "Nor engaged—nor anything like that. I never was."

Johnny's relief was really great.

"Then what can you mean? You didn't happen to—to kill anybody—out there in the bush—did you?"

She shook her head. "No," she murmured; "nothing like that. I told you it wasn't anything that I had done."

"Nor that any one had—had done to you?"

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“No—not directly to me. But I suffer for it.”

Johnny thought he understood.

“Is it—is it because you don’t know—because you haven’t any father?” he persisted.

She clutched his arm at the mention of her father. “It is something about my father that I can’t tell you,” she replied.

Again Johnny stopped. There was no one in sight, and he took both her hands in his.

“Emily!” he pleaded. “Do you think I care anything about your father? Do you think I care whether you ever had a father or not?”

Emily raised her eyes and looked into his. There was light enough in the street so that he could see the pain in them, and the love, and the look of terror that she could not overcome. There was something there that his tender assurances could not put to flight.

“Darling!” he cried. “What *is* it? Don’t torture me!”

But Emily put out her hands with a gesture as if to thrust him away from tempting her, and with a sob she turned and ran away from him as fast as she could go.

He caught up with her in a moment.

“Don’t!” she implored. “Let me go. You wouldn’t touch me if you knew.”

“Touch you?” he echoed. “I’d touch you if you were a leper! I’d hold you close and never

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let you go. I'd hold you if your hands were red with blood—if the hounds of hell were after you. I love you, Emily—do you hear me? I love you! And I'll never let you go!"

Emily stared at him with frightened eyes.

"Oh!" she gasped. "You don't know what you're saying!"

"I *do* know what I'm saying. You may tell me your dark secret, or you may keep it. But I'm going to marry you."

Ecstasy and terror contended within poor little Emily. She shook like a leaf in the wind.

"You won't," she sobbed—"you won't when you know that my father was your father's assassin."

"Assassin?" he echoed dazedly.

"Bardeen," she whispered—the name had not passed her lips nor assaulted her ears since she was a child. "My name is Emily Constance Bardeen."

"Good God!" Johnny murmured weakly, and sat down on some steps they were passing.

Emily regarded him tragically. "I knew how it would be," she said; "I told you how it would be."

Johnny passed his hand across his eyes as if trying to brush away a film. He grasped the railing and rose weakly to his feet.

"Bardeen!" he groaned. "Oh, Emily!"

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“I told you,” she reiterated.

The exasperation brought him to his senses like a good irritant. “Told me what?” he demanded. “Do you suppose I hold that against you? Do you think that is the kind of a man I am? Don’t you know I love you better—for what you have suffered—instead of less?”

Emily was exultant but not comforted.

“Mother,” she faltered — “mother will never——”

He took her firmly by the arm.

“You come right home now,” he commanded, “and tell your mother that you are going to marry me. Don’t *ask* anything about it. Just tell her it is settled between you and me, and nothing can unsettle it.”

Johnny had never been so happy in his life. He had walked right up to a great big ogre in his path and had said “Pooh!” and it had vanished. As Ballard Creighton said, every male creature yearns to believe himself a Jack-the-Giant-Killer.

CHAPTER XV

IN THE MORNING

OLIVIA was in bed when Emily came in, but not asleep. Her mind had been pitilessly alert since dinner time. She expected the announcement Emily was to make, and she had been preparing herself to meet it.

In all the world Olivia had nothing to make her selfish—nothing but Emily. So far as she herself was concerned, it could make little or no difference to her what was known about her. She had no friends; she had no name; she had no position; she had nothing to lose. But even if she saw suffering ahead for herself she would not have flinched; for she was no coward, and she knew how many things there are that are worse than pain. With all her heart she desired Emily's happiness; no other consideration obtruded itself upon her at any time. It was to know wherein that happiness might be expected to lie, and to decide how far she might justifiably go in presuming to advise or to interfere, that kept her pondering.

Emily opened the door gently. The light was

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turned low, but not so low that Emily needed to say a word; her face told her happiness.

Olivia had deep reverence for that happiness. It was something to compel awe. She felt, in the presence of it, as a sun-worshipper does before an altar warmed with sacred fire. She sat up in bed and held out her arms to her daughter.

Emily ran to her, dropped on her knees, and buried her head in her mother's breast.

For a while neither spoke. Then Olivia relaxed the straining intensity of the clasp with which she had held Emily against her heart and drew back her head so she could look down into the girl's face.

"Are you—very happy?" she whispered.

"Oh, mother! If you only knew."

It was no time for argument, for discussion. Olivia said not a single word of questioning. She said few words of any sort. And Emily was in an ecstasy that transcended speech. But when she had undressed she laid herself down, not on her own cot, but beside her mother. And close-locked in her mother's arms she lay until, drowned in her full flood of happiness, she fell asleep.

"In the morning," Olivia thought, "we can talk about it. To-night—! Oh, God! I remember nights like this—a few—the night I sat in the library of the Mansion, beneath the portrait of the War Governor—a night or two in the little

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park under the light of the friendly stars—I have paid dear for them! But if I could have foreseen all I should hardly have had strength to deny myself those moments. I lived thirty-five years hoping for them—waiting. If I live other thirty-five years, I shall still be on fire with the memory of them. That's what it means to love: Immortal Youth!"

In the morning Emily opened her eyes upon a "world made new." Olivia remembered such mornings, too! Remembered coming up out of a sea of dreams and opening her eyes on a workaday sphere, but a sphere glorified—because he was in it. She remembered listening to the strokes of the Capitol clock and thinking that he, too, heard them—that they counted off time for him as for her, and that he, too, reckoned each hour till their next meeting. . . . It was impossible to hurt Love in the morning!

They had breakfast in their room—a little luxury they always allowed themselves by arrangement with the landlady.

Olivia took the tray from the servant and set their tiny table, from which the books were temporarily deposed. She looked wistfully at it when it was spread.

"Nobody knows," she said, smiling tenderly, "how I want a rose—a wonderful, perfect rose—to put on our table—for you, dear."

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Emily came over to her mother and kissed her with grateful fervor.

"I didn't know," she murmured, "that you would—would take it like—this."

"You didn't know that I would love your happiness?"

"I mean—I was afraid——"

Olivia's face was telltale; she had never learned to command its expressions.

"I told Johnny," said Emily proudly, "and he said it didn't make a bit of difference to him—that he only loved me more for what I had suffered."

"You told him——?"

"Who I am—yes. He said: 'Do you think I care anything about your father? Do you think I care whether you ever had a father or not?' He said he'd love me if I were a leper; that he'd love me if my hands were red with blood and if the hounds of hell were after me."

Emily was exultant; but Olivia was thoughtful. They sat down in their accustomed places on either side of the little table. Emily looked across at her mother, waiting for her to speak.

"Nobody else need ever know," Emily ventured at length, when she was tired of waiting for her mother to break the silence.

"I wonder——" Olivia murmured.

"Why should they?" the girl pursued eagerly.

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"Who will tell? Not Johnny, certainly! And not I! And not you!"

"Wasn't he going to—did he think it best not to tell the others—his brother and Rose?"

"He said it was none of their business—that it was nobody's business but his and mine."

"That isn't so!" Olivia cried. "Don't ever cheat yourselves that way. Your love is other people's business as well as yours. You can't make it otherwise. I *know*, dear—I *know*!"

"I don't see—" Emily began. Her shadowy recollections of her father and mother when together were not such as to foster the belief that her mother had ever known much about love. Certainly she could never have known anything like this love that was Emily's and Johnny's.

Olivia read her daughter's mind—it was no extraordinary feat, for all young minds in like situation are very much the same.

"You think I do not understand," she chided gently; "but I do, darling—I do. If Johnny Innes marries you without telling the others, you will both live in perpetual fear of discovery——"

"No, we sha'n't!" Emily protested. "But suppose we were 'discovered,' as you call it. What's the harm? I can't help what father did!"

"You can't help it—no! But you know how David and Rose Innes—and everybody who loves them—regard the murderer of their idolized father.

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Suppose they suddenly find out that the girl Johnny has married and brought to them as a sister is the child of that man by whom their father was laid low! They will resent having been deceived——”

“Well!” Emily replied impatiently; “suppose they do! They are not essential to our happiness. We can go where they need never see us any more.”

“But their happiness? What of that? How can they be happy if Johnny is where they never see him any more?”

“That is not our lookout,” Emily declared. “A man shall leave father and mother and every one and cleave to his wife. Everybody does it! When Rose, and Davy, marry we will not interfere.”

Olivia’s mind was made up. Love was sacred in her eyes, but she knew it was not meant that any should worship it. It was a fire lent to warm life, but not to rule it. When any one allows Love to become ruthless he is like the prostrate pagan who will not put fire out though it destroy him and all he holds most dear.

“Emily,” she began, “I must tell you something. You are to tell it to Johnny Innes—if you don’t, I will. And he is to tell it to Davy and Rose——”

She stopped, overcome by a staggering thought. How *could* it be told to them! What could possi-

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bly justify the telling? She had been so full of self-immolation, she had not realized how she was purposing to immolate them also.

Emily stared at her.

"It can't be done!" Olivia went on.

"What can't be done?"

Olivia nerved herself for the disclosure; but her courage failed her—not on her own account, but on Emily's.

"I—I'll tell you some other time," she faltered.

"I want to know now," Emily insisted. "Let's get this thing settled. I don't want to face Johnny again with any uncertainty in my mind."

Suspense was cruel, Olivia knew. So she mustered all her strength and went on.

"Johnny Innes—all the Inneses," she began, "think—all the world thinks—that Lyman Innes was murdered by a man whose cause of hatred was—the strike. It is not true. He was killed by a man who was jealous—of a woman—of his wife——"

"I don't understand."

"Lyman Innes did not die a martyr to the strike. He died because—he was my friend."

"Your friend?"

"My lover—your father thought. He did love me—but not in the base way your father believed. You remember the last night we were at home—how I was locked in my room and you climbed

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over the transom—how we escaped in the morning, out of the window—how we hid at your Uncle Walter's—and were there when we—heard what your father had done. Nobody knew the truth—or, if anybody knew, it was not told. He deserved all the good that was said of him—and more, much more. He did not deserve that any ill should be said of him. Providence took care of his good name—it is almost a hallowed name to-day. You couldn't tell his children the truth—they would never understand—the blow would kill them—or kill the best in them—their faith."

Emily was crying bitterly. She left the table and went over to her cot and threw herself upon it, shaking with sobs.

"Don't touch me!" she moaned when her mother sought to comfort her. "Don't come near me. I can't bear it!"

CHAPTER XVI

LOVE'S FOOL

BOTH McCurdy and Creighton found in Catherine Krakopfsky a well-spring of interest at which it seemed they could not drink deep enough.

She had worked in sweat-shops in New York for five years, and every minute of the time her eyes and ears were open to all that was going on around her. She knew conditions among the workers; knew their opinions, their aspirations. She had read widely; she was familiar with Russian literature, with German, and with English; she knew a very little about the literature of the French—and that chiefly the Flemish French of the Belgian Socialists—and more about the Scandinavian propaganda of individualism. These latter, however, were available to her only in translations. The German and the English she read as freely as she read Russian.

Her reading, as might have been expected of a girl already well imbued before she left Russia with the spirit of the Revolutionists, was largely

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along economic lines. But it was the way her experience vivified her reading that made her so intensely interesting to men like Creighton and McCurdy. She could tell each of them a world of things he never could find out for himself.

"For no matter how close you try to come," she said, "you are not of us—even you, Mr. Creighton. You were of us once, but you put yourself away. When you found that the education you gave yourself was not only joy, but capital—that it enabled you to make forty, sixty, a hundred dollars a week—then you became as 'class-conscious' as Mr. McCurdy here who was never poor. You cannot quite feel us as we feel ourselves."

"But you are better educated," he objected, "than I ever dreamed of being."

She smiled. "In ideas, maybe, but not in skill. And even in ideas, I only appreciate; I do not create. Who pays for appreciation? No one in this country, certainly. Here you must *do something*. *What* you do is least matter; but *that* you do is imperative. I cannot do—I have no skill or shrewdness. I can only feel!"

There was that about her more potent than any skill—but she was unaware of it. She had the power to make men thrill with desire to do as she directed. She could have led an army. Strategy to plan a campaign or to direct a battle, she might have lacked. But she could have carried

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a standard and drawn men after it into the very jaws of hell. She was unawakened to this power in herself. The awakening was to come.

She was twenty-three—slight in build, but sinewy, with the pallor of close confinement indoors. Her eyes were blue and of an extraordinary keenness. Her hair was brown and uncurly, and she made no effort to arrange it in any but the simplest and most expeditious way—in a flat coil at the crown of her head. She had no features that were prominent for any reason, either of size or shape or beauty or ugliness. Her charm, her distinction, was all in her expression. When she talked she was attractive. When she was intensely in earnest she was irresistible.

Catherine earned about nine dollars a week when she was working. The slack seasons in the clothing industry come twice a year and last sometimes as long as six weeks or two months. This brought the average of Catherine's earnings down to six dollars a week out of which she obliged herself always to save a little in case of calamity—strikes, shut-downs, accident, illness, death. There were so many things that might happen to an unprotected girl, or to her sister. Sonia gave Catherine more concern than all the rest of life together.

Sonia was young — only eighteen. She was pretty, in a soft, sensuous way that appealed in-

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stantly to the masculine eye. She was pleasure-loving. She was mad about clothes. Sonia wouldn't work at tailoring among a lot of frowsy, half-dressed men and shabby, ill-dressed girls. She was a "saleslady," and her ultimate ambition was the chorus. She was the cause of Catherine's liberal education in the dangers that beset the working girl.

Both Creighton and McCurdy were intensely interested in what Catherine knew of this latter subject. It lay close to the big purposes of both of them. They had studied it as best they could from the outside. Catherine knew it from the inside.

She nodded appreciatively when Creighton's hope was unfolded to her. She was less inclined to regard McCurdy's with favor.

"You Russians are too terribly uncompromising," McCurdy charged. "It is one reason, perhaps, why you get nowhere with your Revolution."

Catherine smiled grimly. "There is no possible compromise with some predatory things," she retorted. "As well talk of compromise with a tiger of Bengal."

"There is no man," contended Lucius, "who is wholly evil. There is none that cannot be made to do good."

She shook her head. "There is no man who is wholly evil—no. In prisons there are murderers

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who love a little canary-bird, and wreckers of other people's honor who weep when they read a poem about a child. But we dare not compromise with them and give them liberty, because when they have liberty the good in them is not strong enough to restrain the bad. Many a murderer did not know he could cherish a canary until he was locked up for taking life—human life, with all its loves, its destinies, unfulfilled. I say to you that your Powers that Prey ought not to be compromised with. A wolf got loose in the park—a well-fed wolf, with his belly full—and there was panic till he was caught. Yet you say wolves can be made to serve the lambs—by compromise! Oh, dreamer!”

Lucius was nettled—but not repulsed.

“I'll convert you yet,” he declared. “You also dream. But I need your dreams,” he went on. “If you will help me—if you will give me a chance—I think I can prove to you that there is a place for me. Perhaps only as a middleman; but that's something. You who will not compromise need not hope for power. If I attain power it will be something, surely, that the dreamers have my ear. I talked the other day with a man of brain, of wide influence, who says that ideality of any sort can never again enter into government—that commerce rules the world, and the principles of commerce must underlie all government. Government

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is a form of business, he says: the conservation of many businesses. I don't believe that. I believe that when ideality goes out of government the life goes out of it; that when it grapples only with things as they are and ceases to struggle after things as they should be, it will be a soulless, perfunctory institution, ready for overthrow. I believe in government with one ear to the ground, to determine what is practicable. But with all my soul I believe that the other ear should be strained to listen to the choir invisible, to learn what is desirable."

Catherine was not convinced, but she was impressed.

"I am willing to learn," she told him.

She agreed to go with them on Saturday evening on a round of places where the girls of Sonia's sort, released from toil and seeking to satisfy themselves as to the beauty and pleasantness of life, its romance and its high adventure, went for recreation.

"They are young," she said, "and they must laugh. They are women, and they must try to charm. They are souls, and they must spread their wings in venture. They work in a too-real world. They are impelled when they play into an unreal world to feed their fancy, to keep romance alive in them, so that when they mate there may be ecstasy in it. It is nature struggling

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in them to perpetuate itself; in a passionate desire to approve life, to be glad, to look forward hopefully. And they need it so!"

Creighton was enchanted with her understanding. He had read far more widely along some lines than she had, especially with regard to the history of Play and its psychology. But she was able, out of her observation and experience, to illumine what he had read and to suggest its adaptability to complex New-World conditions.

Much that was potent in the Middle Ages to entertain and instruct a people unified in religious beliefs, racial traditions, and close communal experience, would be valueless in the modern city of a hundred tongues, a hundred creeds, a hundred racial insularities and prejudices.

Not much is elemental, universal. Music, dancing—these are the appeal of rhythm, an appeal nearly every human creature feels. There are some occasions for humor that are nearly universal. There are some aspirations almost everybody shares.

Creighton was groping among these realizations, seeking the foundation for his scheme. The "smoker" conference in McCurdy's sitting-room had been vastly interesting, but not immensely productive of suggestions. It was agreed that the hunger for ideas and ideals was there. But it was by no means determined how any one

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was to get past surface prejudices and reach it, or what one might reasonably hope to reach it with.

"I am coming," Creighton told Catherine, "to believe that our saddest lack is a lack of heroes. I know what Browning prayed: 'Make no more giants, God; but elevate the race.' But if I prayed, I should pray otherwise. Rinaldo is all right for the Italians, The Cid is splendid for the Spaniards. But they don't seem to come near enough to life as it is to-day. Rinaldo doesn't seem to suggest to our Little Italy what qualities of a crusading hero are needed in New York to-day. The Cid who drove Moors from Spain doesn't seem to suggest how marauding powers may be driven from Manhattan Island. We need heroes in civic life. Even military heroes are only half-sufficient, because the average man's duty to his country is far less likely now to be in bearing arms than in forbearing to be bribed or bought or browbeaten. We need more men whose idealism and whose righteousness have been found potent against the temptations that assail men to-day. And when I see persons using their little power to minimize the big, to belittle the great, to search out the flaws where other men of better faith have found only that which commands reverence—then I can only wonder at our moral code which avenges the destruction of life, although it

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holds death but the entrance upon Immortality; while the destruction of belief it avenges not at all."

Creighton had been in conference that day with Bruce Norbury and Ansel Rodman.

They had taken a Third Avenue surface car at Catherine's corner and ridden to Grand Street. Here, instead of getting on the cross-town car, they started to walk.

Third Avenue is presumed by those who seldom see it to be somewhere near the limits of New York's East Side. Second Avenue is occasionally heard of "uptown"; First Avenue, only semi-occasionally. What, if anything, may lie beyond First Avenue, upper Fifth Avenue has never troubled itself to wonder. A city lies east of First Avenue!—a big city in extent and in population. It has very little conscious relation to other cities lying north of Astor Place and west of the Bowery—even less conscious relationship than those other cities-within-a-city have to it.

Grand Street was not unfamiliar to Catherine or to either of the two men; but it had its unfailing fascination for each of them.

The push-cart gentry were in full swing to-night. It seemed as if the curb could not have accommodated another merchant, not only along both sides of Grand Street, much farther than the eye could reach, but rounding all of the many

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corners and stretching down for forty or fifty feet into every side street.

Great numbers of the carts this November night displayed furs—near-mink and almost-lynx and even “erminette”—made up into neck-pieces and muffs that kept pace with, if not Fifth Avenue styles, at least with those of Sixth Avenue.

Of other articles the push-carts offered many were of an intimate nature: corsets, garters, underwear, stockings. Some catered to the vanities and sold millinery, veilings, cheap jewelry; numbers of them dealt briskly in false hair—jute and the tresses of executed Chinese. Others were purveyors to the housewife: foodstuffs and kitchenware and calico wrappers and gingham aprons. Her lord was tempted with gilt collar buttons and leatherette purses and ready-made neckties and with shoestrings—as well as with underwear and jean trousers and yarn socks and cowhide shoes.

In addition to the curbstone merchants, Grand Street presented two lines of shops as long and as little varied in general character as the shopping length of Broadway.

One might marvel where purchasers could come from sufficient to support the trade of this one street did not one thread one's way amongst them with such difficulty. They are there to answer the question before it can be raised.

They were of both sexes, with the women

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slightly predominating, and of all ages. But one noticed no class among them so much as one noticed the girls. The girls were there to be noticed, and they spared no effort to accomplish their desire. It is the marketplace to which maidens from time immemorial have brought their charms for display as Nature directs them to.

The majority of the girls were hatless, and every head was built out of all semblance to a human head with masses of jute and bunches of puffs. Rhinestones glittered in every coiffure. And that girl was not discoverable who was not chewing gum. "Suits" were less universal than ordinarily, owing to the season's preference for military capes; at least half of the younger women in evidence wore these capes of dark-blue shoddy cloth trimmed with red facings and brass buttons. The others were obliged to make what showing they could with a suit and the ubiquitous white waist much inset with medallions and cheap lace. There was as little attempt at individuality of dressing as there is on Broadway, each woman following the others as closely as she can in a panic of fearfulness lest she be discovered a step behind "the latest."

They were of a dozen nationalities, those girls—Russian and Polish and German Jews, Italians, Bohemians, Lithuanians, a sprinkling of the Irish always to be found where Jews abound, Hunga-

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rians, Czechs, and Slovaks (not to enumerate the others). A majority of them were foreign-born. Probably not one of them had a parent born in this country. All of them were wage-earners. Many of them lived at home with their people. A minority, but still a great number, were what our government in its commerce and labor reports calls "the girl adrift"—meaning the working girls in cities who live among strangers.

Too frequently the strangers the girls live among are their own kith and kin—their un-Americanized parents clinging to the social customs of the homeland and daily receding further and further in estrangement behind their eagerly advancing young sons and daughters.

Catherine knew all this—not superficially, as an observer knows, but intensively and from within.

"Because I want you to feel as I feel these girls' needs," she said to the two men, "I open my heart to you about my little Sonia. I am helpless to protect her—not so helpless as the parents of these girls we see, because I know more of conditions here and can warn Sonia, but helpless enough to drive me nearly mad. I would love to go with her wherever she goes, to share in her pastimes as is the good old-country way. But she resents it. That is not the American way. Her friends do not want me. I am not clever as I should be, or not so big as I should be, and they

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realize that I go along, not because I am attracted by what they do, but because I want to be with Sonia—to ‘watch,’ they say; and they set her against my doing it. . . . So I can do little. I must not make her chafe until she leaves me and I cannot find her any more. I must take her word for where she goes and what she does. I cannot know her acquaintances, because there is no place she can ask them to where I can meet them. She does not like to read, to study, to observe. There is nothing for her in our little room—nothing in books—nothing in going to a class where she may learn something, even to make a hat. She is young; she is pretty; she is mad for pleasure. Nature made her for one thing—even more specifically than some other women are made—to mate. With all her eager young heart she is pining for her other half, without which she does not know how to conceive life to be worth while. I am beyond her ken because I find myself interests of other sorts. She is right, I dare say, and I am wrong. . . . This street is full of Sonias—not so pretty as my child and not so sweet, but with like passions and like circumstance. They were designed in the plan of the world to be appealing—in their tender youth; were designed to look out on the world with eyes easily dazzled by romance. In a way it’s cruel! Nature tricks them—to serve her. It is well, I suppose, that

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they should submit. If only they could discriminate *a little !*”

They had turned north from Grand Street and were going to a dance hall Catherine knew. Part of her confidence about Sonia came in snatches in the quieter street; part of it she did not have opportunity to say until they sat in the gallery looking down on the dancers.

It was an orderly dance. Many young married couples were there with their small children. Youngsters of two and upward mingled with the dancers on the floor, sliding or dancing as their accomplishments allowed. Babies were plentiful. Fathers would hold their infants while the mothers danced. Then mothers would relieve the fathers and take their own turn with the babies. Sweet-hearting among the younger couples was vigorous and unabashed. In the gallery where Catherine and the two men sat there was constant coming and going of couples who left the dance floor for a season of “spooning.” The gallery was dotted with them, each fondly embracing couple in full sight of all the others, but none of them the least self-conscious or embarrassed. Nature teaches all her creatures to adapt themselves to their environment. And where conditions are such that private courting is impossible, she easily overcomes any scruples there may be against pursuing courtship wherever it may be done.

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"There are people," Catherine went on, nodding her head in the direction of these couples, "who come down here and *laugh* at this. Insensate fools! If they had any more vision than a bat they would see what it all means; and the weak ones would weep, but the strong ones would do something!"

The dance was orderly; but disorder lurked upon its heels. There was a saloon below the dance hall and it was apparently against the code of none of the girls to go down between dances for beer. Creighton went below and watched through several intermissions.

"I scarcely saw a girl touch anything but beer," he reported. "And of course, bred as they were, that's no more than ice-cream soda is to an American girl. But it's the saloon influence. If there could be a 'straight' saloon! run for the legitimate profit in legitimate drinks. But I never saw one. A saloon-keeper who isn't a pander and a prey for blackmail is as rare as a white black-bird."

Catherine nodded. "That's it!" she said. "It's the traps that are laid for the girls that make your blood boil."

"It's too bad," McCurdy mused, "that economic conditions ever had to evolve to the point where women were literally thrust out of the home."

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"Ah!" cried Catherine, "haven't you progressed beyond that? The changes which have thrust women forth have been bad for some but they have given life—life!—to many."

"What makes the difference?" he persisted.

"Partly what is in the girl when she is forced out and partly what she finds there. Her education helps—that is, her ability and her resources. And conditions help. Inability to earn enough for comfort makes some girls easy prey. And inability to find entertainment puts some others in the spoilers' way. The only things there are for girls to do, that they *care* to do, are like this: they are full of traps that only the wariest girls know how to avoid."

"When my dream unfolds to include the girls," Creighton mused, "what I offer them must not be too passive. Their youth demands something they can *do*—like dancing and the 'rides' at Coney Island. Would that there were some extension of the kindergarten plan to fit maidenhood!"

"Yes," Catherine answered; "yes! that is what makes me think sometimes that I would be glad if Sonia could get into a chorus."

McCurdy gasped. "You don't know what you're saying!" he protested.

Creighton came quickly to Catherine's defense. "I think she does," he contended. "Sonia's

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temptations there could not be stronger or more frequent than they are in a shop. And it *is* something to be a part of the production of gayety. The chorus isn't as gay a place as it looks to be; but it is exciting. Sonia could have some of her love of excitement gratified there, and might not have to go such lengths to seek what her nature craves. Dancing maidens! They have always been. They ought always to be. I'm glad the revival of dancing is on in such earnest. Think of the day," he cried, "when girls like these shall dance for love of the grace and beauty of it, as they now dance for mere love of the rhythm! When they shall consciously express in it poetry and all that inspires!"

He was rapt in his vision and made transcendently happy by it.

When they rose to go, he said that if they would excuse him he would linger. They understood, and went on without him.

As they approached Catherine's door, still deep in their discussions that, instead of coming to an end, were always opening up long, new vistas, McCurdy said:

"I must talk with you about that. When shall I see you again?"

Catherine smiled. "Any evening," she answered wistfully, "when you want to walk the streets or to sit in some Bowery resort like the

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Atlantic Garden. I have no place that I can ask you to."

"And I," he muttered, "have the place but I can't ask you there."

"No," she agreed; "that's not to be thought of—for your sake, not mine."

"Won't you let me come sometimes and take you out to dine? There's always *that* possibility!"

"Not to me," she answered, "unless it were a very shabby kind of place where my working clothes wouldn't shame you."

"There are scores of nice places," he assured her, "where clothes do not matter."

"All I ask of them," she declared, "is that the opportunity for talking be good. You cannot know how starved I am for talk!"

"We'll take care of that starvation," he promised; and there was a note of tenderness in his voice that Catherine's keen ear did not miss. She was starved for tenderness, too; and the tears rushed to her eyes as she glimpsed happiness ahead.

She laid her hand, trembling with excitement, on his arm, "And when you can," she pleaded, "you will think of the tens of thousands of other girls who have no place to ask a friend to—no place to go? I'm not in danger as they are. I have my world of books—I can go in and shut the door and be a queen. That is my good for-

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tune. Other girls don't have it. You'll remember the girls when you come into your kingdom—won't you?"

"I will," he promised, "and they shall thank you."

Catherine's pulses were throbbing madly as she climbed the stairs to her room. She had never felt like this before.

Mollie, tear-stained and dishevelled, was sleeping on her bed.

"She beat me," Mollie sobbed when Catherine roused her, "and I run away. And after I thought she wouldn't be lookin' fer me no more I came back an' came in here. I didn't know where to go or I wouldn't have never come back!" she cried.

Catherine snatched the child to her breast with a passionate protectiveness.

"No, Mollie!" she entreated. "You mustn't think of things like that. I know it's bad here—but it would be worse if you ran away. I'll try to find some place that you can go—and be safe. I'll ask—I know some one I can ask; some one who's strong and good and who wants to help, and knows how."

"Your fella?" Mollie inquired interestedly.

Catherine flushed. "I haven't any 'fellow,'" she said. "What made you think of such a thing?"

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"The way you looked when you was talkin' about him," observed Mollie shrewdly.

Catherine denied indignantly to herself that she had any such thoughts as Mollie gave her credit for. "I'm not a fool!" she told herself.

But she was—Love's fool.

CHAPTER XVII

OLD AND NEW CHIVALRY

AFTER Lucius and Catherine had gone, Creighton sat watching the dancers for a while, then went down again to the bar, where he ordered a succession of soft drinks—lemon and seltzer, varied with ginger ale and Angostura bitters. Like most men who have once been slaves to drink, Creighton could never dally with it after he had renounced his slavery.

The bartender who served him was interested. Himself an abstemious person, he knew the signs of the reclaimed drunkard.

"I don't touch it either," he confided to Creighton.

Creighton was watching a group at a near-by table where the girls were growing maudlin in their merriment.

"I wish *they* wouldn't touch it!" he murmured, his gaze on the girls.

The bartender approved. "Not for *my* girl, I can tell you! And say! it's something to be in the business; then anything you tell your girl against it has got to *go*. She can't come back at

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you with talk about you not knowin'. I got one that's sixteen. And she's wise to a few things that I know, you bet."

Creighton nodded. "That's the stuff!" he said. "I wonder where these girls' fathers think their daughters are."

"Some of 'em don't think," replied the bartender. "An' some of 'em can't think—they don't know how. That's the trouble with these girls—they ain't never had nothin' that you could call bringin' up."

The moral reflections continued as the exigencies of business allowed. Then—

"Your face is mighty familiar to me," the bartender remarked.

Creighton was accustomed to the type of waiter and barber and other much-wandering servitor whose chief point of pride it is to recall faces and identify them with places, thus entering upon a long account of movements from pillar to post.

"Yes?" he answered abstractedly.

"Let me think!" The bartender was searching his memory, hoping to give an exhibition of his powers. "I—I place you vaguely," he went on, "in connection with trouble—with—with labor troubles—with a strike—with the big strike of '94. I was 'tending bar in a place that was in the thick of it. I'll tell you——"

He was quite excited now. And Creighton

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couldn't help being interested as the man went on to locate the place which Creighton had indeed frequented and to describe it.

"A good many of the strike leaders used to come in there," he continued. "And of course, it bein' such a great strike, an' everybody interested, I took particular notice. I don't know's I ever heard your name; but you used to be with the men that was pretty high up in the strike. Bein' in sympathy with the men that was out, I was keen on keepin' track of the way things was goin'. Funny thing! before the strike was over I found myself in quite a dif'rent camp. Somethin' happened 'tween me 'n' the boss, an' I hiked. You know how 'tis: when you hike you want a good change. So I thought I'd hike as far's the Capital. There was promise of excitement there. They got it, too—though not the kind they was lookin' for."

Creighton was instantly alert. "You mean the Governor's death?"

"Yes. I was almost, you might say, mixed up in that, too."

"Mixed up in it?"

"Well," laughing, "not so's you could arrest me for an accomplice. But I happened to know something about the assassin—Bardeen. He used to hang around our place—where I was workin'—about every night. And say! there's things about that killin' that ain't ever got into print."

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"What kind of things?" Creighton was trying to keep down his excitement.

"Durn nasty things. Tell you how I know. Bardeen, as I say, used to be around our place a lot. It was quite a hangin'-out place for men like him who had been shut out o' work by the strike and was all against it."

Here the narrative had to stop while some dancers were served with drinks. Creighton could hardly restrain his impatience.

But the narrator was enjoying his recital too much to stay longer away from it than was absolutely necessary. It was not every day he found a listener who cared to know how he was identified with history.

"Of course," he resumed, "I used to overhear a lot that was said there, too. And one night—it was the night after the Governor had got back from seein' the President and persuadin' him not to interfere—I got the drift of some talk about a woman. Seems the employers that was so sore on the Governor had been havin' him watched awful close, hopin' for a case for impeachment. There was somethin' said about a woman goin' to the Capitol every day, and that she had the inside o' things with the Governor. Seemed he was pretty dippy about her and used to meet her evenings in the park. Somebody said he heard it was Bardeen's wife. They called it a darn clever

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game. Bardeen come in while they was talkin', and they braced him about it. He acted kind o' crazy at first. 'That's all right,' they told him; 'ain't nobody here goin' to give you away. It's a pretty old game, but it nearly always works.' He calmed down some after that; but he hardly stayed at all. . . . Next thing any of us knew he'd shot the Governor. There was something queer about it that nobody could make out. He practically admitted that the men he worked for had used his wife as a tool. Question is: why would he want to kill the Governor? There's a side to that story that ain't never got out."

"Have you told it to many people?"

"No. I used to talk about it some when the murder was fresh in everybody's mind, and it was thought by some that Bardeen had been hired to do the job. But of late years I ain't scarcely thought of it—till tryin' to place you got me thinkin' of the big strike."

"So that was it—was it?" Creighton mused as he went home, deeply thoughtful. "The old, old Delilah game! Poor human flesh!"

The first meeting of "the conspirators," as Rodman called them, was not a long one—chiefly for lack of a proper place in which to talk. Bruce Norbury inclined little to Lares and Penates; they were an encumbrance. He had just now a

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room somewhere in the neighborhood of Gramercy Park, and took his meals at The Players, where he spent also a great deal of his time. He asked Rodman and Creighton and Penhallow to meet him at the club Saturday for luncheon. They talked the thing over as well as they could in such a place, with dozens of men they all knew going and coming constantly. Then, when it became evident that not much could be accomplished there, Irving Penhallow asked the three others to come to his rooms on Tenth Street on Sunday afternoon, any time after four.

Irving Penhallow was a dapper little gentleman of close on sixty-five. He was small and delicately made, and his movements were quick, almost bird-like. His hair—what he had—and his side-whiskers were quite snowy white; his complexion was pink—not rubicund, but flushed with a healthy glow under a fine, thin skin; and his eyes were very, very blue. He was wholesomeness and happiness personified.

He came from New Hampshire, which he still considered the garden spot of the universe—though it was observable that he picked with some nicety his seasons of returning thither, and they were never earlier than May nor later than November.

He had never married. "Couldn't risk it!" he always declared cheerily, when there was occa-

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sion to say anything about it. "How could I expect any lady to set her house in order and then, as soon as it *was* in order, tire of it and want to begin all over again?"

Regarding income, Penhallow was one of those peculiarly fortunate men who have enough to enable them to get a fair measure of what they want, but not enough to make pursuit too easy. Somewhere up among the granite hills of his native State there was a stone quarry which yielded him a few thousands annually. And also, it was reputed, he realized a rather handsome profit each time he sold out his collection. When he went about buying, he acted not only in his own interest but as a roving commissioner of a big decorative concern in New York; and there were numerous private collectors for whom he made purchases. The stone quarry had been a great help to him in years gone by. But if it were to fail now he would not need to suffer diminution of income. There were always people in abundance who desired his taste and his time.

He used to shake his head over the futility of persons who wanted their antiques discovered for them. He could as easily understand a man who would pay some one to go to the opera for him and bring him home a report of it. And when he was offered round sums for his place—whatever it was, Colonial or Chippendale or Flemish—he was wont

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to say that it seemed "like taking candy from children. Here I've had all the fun and they want to pay me good money for a thing that's no more, now, than mere furniture. *Using* things isn't living. It's *getting* them!"

Creighton was the first to arrive on Sunday afternoon. The house on Tenth Street was a few doors west of Fifth Avenue. It is always comparatively quiet in that neighborhood, which is one of the most charming in New York; but on a Sunday afternoon there is almost a cloistral hush, broken only by the occasional rumble of a motor 'bus or the chugging of an automobile—not many of which, however, go down that far on Sunday.

When Creighton rounded the corner of Tenth Street the sun was not far above the roof-tops of Sixth Avenue. The vesper song of the myriad birds who nest in the vines that mantle the church on the corner was the dominant sound here. At the end of the long block which stretched away toward Sixth Avenue was the Jefferson Market Police Court, the roaring Elevated overhead, the clanging trolleys in the street, and all around cheap dinginess and the natural environs of a police court. But here! what order and what seemliness!

Penhallow had the parlor floor of an old residence that had long been a sort of improvised apartment house. There was a basement, level

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with the street or not more than a step below, and a high stoop of brown stone with an iron railing. A couple of "bachelor girls" had transformed the basement into a very cozy home, which began with "anything to escape from boarding-houses," and was slowly emerging from chaos into comeliness, under Irving Penhallow's direction.

A colored man with a grizzled head answered Creighton's ring. In passing through the front hall, he had a brief impression of uncompromising commonplaceness which Irving Penhallow had evidently tried to mitigate but could not overcome. Then Uncle Benjamin opened the drawing-room door, and Creighton stepped into a world thousands of miles removed from New York and hundreds of years removed from this present.

The politest books on etiquette doubtless bid the guest to ignore surroundings, whether grand or poor, and to seem to be aware of but one thing, and that his host or hostess. But Irving Penhallow would have been distinctly hurt if any newcomer to his rooms had followed those polite directions. He loved above all possible other tributes to him the involuntary gasp of surprise with which persons first made this transition.

"It—it's like a fairy tale!" declared Creighton when he could say anything at all.

It was. One had a sense of the unreality of it all as if it must be a dream.

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Creighton was anything but a connoisseur. He did not know even the names of the things he saw. He was aware only of the effect. Not many who came to wonder and to admire, could carry away any kind of a coherent or intelligible story of what they had seen. In general one realized a salon-like effect, for the two big parlors with their old-fashioned high ceilings made a room of proportions at least sufficiently ample to suggest not too mockingly the spacious apartments where these furnishings had once belonged.

Further than this, one got an impression of walls hung in something that gave the tone of old gilt and was a most marvellous background or frame for the whole picture. The ceiling was truly "filched," and was very like—Penhallow said—some ceilings in the smaller apartments of the Pitti Palace.

The other prevailing tint—other than the old gilt—was rose, an exquisite semi-faded rose. One was dimly conscious of chairs upholstered in this color. For the rest, one took in no more than a vague notion of candles burning in sconces that looked as if they might have held lights for Michelangelo; of Fra Angelica angels, and della Robbia cherubs, and busts in painted wood of Florentine ladies with meekly parted hair. Near the rear of the apartment was a table with a velvet "runner" and a dish of fruit that looked like a Veronese

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picture minus the gayly gowned people. Even the fruit suggested "an Old Master."

The thing that held Penhallow to this nearly perfect apartment was the lack of a truly suitable fireplace. He had "overcome" the New York grate and mantel in a quite wonderful degree. But he would never be satisfied until he had done much better than this.

The glow from his fire was grateful, however, on this November afternoon. And after Creighton had expressed as well as he could his wonder and admiration, Mr. Penhallow took him in to see the infinitely quaint little bedroom he had made out of what used to be known as "the extension" of the drawing-room floor.

"And here," he laughed, opening a door into a perfectly appointed bathroom in the most modern style, "is where I have an advantage over Lorenzo the Magnificent. He beat me on ceilings; but I've got him skinned in facilities for keeping clean."

"And who keeps this wonderful place in such impeccable order—if I may venture to inquire?"

"Uncle Benjamin. Lorenzo never had the beat of him, either. He's not only an ample household staff, but a first gentleman of the bedchamber and a court jester—all in one. He lives on Sixth Avenue; and it is the most ardent desire I have—next to that fireplace—to know what Uncle Benjamin is like in his own environment."

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“Why?”

“Well, he worked once upon a time for some people I know, here in New York, who were Abolitionists and haven’t got over it yet. They don’t seem to know that the war is over and the slaves are free. And Uncle Benjamin used to harrow their souls with what he told them of the cruelty to negroes before the war.

“The next I knew of him, he was ‘buttle-ing’ for Southern folks, to whom he had represented himself as a ‘Jeff Davis nigger’ of the most ‘unreconstructible’ type. When I had a chance to get him I was filled with wonder as to how he would commend himself to me. I was prepared to hear that he had been Dante’s cook or Lorenzo’s body-servant. But he didn’t go into personalities. He contented himself with saying that this place made him feel like he’d struck ‘own folks’ at last. ‘Dar’s heaps o’ trash livin’ in dis yere town,’ he says, ‘an’ a nigger what was fotch up aris’kratic cain’t git in sohts wid ’em nohow.’ I am allowed to infer that I suggest to Benjamin some sort of an aristocracy to which he is accustomed. If he worked for you I’ll guarantee he’d claim to have been a ‘dresser’ for Booth!”

Creighton laughed. “I don’t wonder you want to know what he is on Sixth Avenue,” he said.

When Rodman and Norbury had arrived,

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Creighton told his experience of the night before—or, rather, of the early morning.

"I think," said Penhallow, speaking first after Creighton had finished, "that perhaps I can understand how—how Lyman Innes might be found susceptible to such a—such a snare. He—Mrs. Innes was an admirable lady—a very admirable lady—but she—she did not quite fill his life—their tastes were not similar."

He looked distressed; one could feel sure that nothing less than loyalty to a dear dead friend whose honor was assailed could have induced Irving Penhallow to admit that any lady "did not quite fill" her husband's life.

Bruce Norbury was a little less reluctant to lay charges against a dead woman's name. He was still hot with resentment against her on Rose's behalf.

"I—I don't want to be lacking in courtesy," he began. "I feel the delicacy of imputing ill to any woman, and least of all to one who cannot defend herself against the imputation. But if Mrs. Innes was capable of believing an anonymous letter, and, much more, if she was willing on no better evidence than that to destroy her child's faith—or try to destroy it—in her idolized father, I cannot see that she deserved any finicking treatment from any one."

"Except," interposed Penhallow, "that she was

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a lady; and one likes to consider the deserts of her sex."

Bruce flushed. "I'm in a bad place," he declared. "For you are an older man, and you are such a perfect argument for the school of courtesy you represent. I'm a young man, and I'm not very hopeful that I'm any kind of an argument for the school of courtesy I try to represent. But what I want to say—with all respect, Mr. Penhallow—is that—well, to-day we don't have consideration for a woman because of her sex, but because of herself. Perhaps the old way was better. But the new way is here. If a woman was mean and petty and unworthy, why must we try to handle her with gloves simply because she never broke the Seventh Commandment? You won't hesitate to call 'the other woman' a vampire and a wanton. Why should you hesitate to admit that the wife was at least potentially despicable? We know it from what she did to her child! I—we can't get anywhere in an effort to understand this case, or any other case of human nature, if we've got to proceed on the premise that a woman is without fault because she belongs to a sex that gives us nearly all our angels. We get the heights of human nature in women; but we get the depths, too. And there're more ways to the depths than adultery. I can't believe that the angels should have to provide whitewash or immunity for the

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mean and unworthy. That's an unwholesome sentimentalism—as unwholesome as the mediæval life that gave it birth. They shut their women up in musty castles, and when the fighting fetched a lull they made madrigals to the ladies' eyebrows. Then every lady was a paragon. To-day we welcome women to share the best thing we have—which is life—and we reverence them—some of them!—because we realize how richly they deserve it. And the best we are is far too poor to give a woman who is good.”

Bruce was unconscious of the length of his plea. He was standing with his back to the fire, and Rodman watched him with an appreciative eye—thinking how fine a figure of the modern knight he was, in his lean length which was far from being lank; measuring his equipment for the present battlefield, which is a battlefield of ideas. It stirred Rodman's sense of whimsicality to think of Norbury delivering that impassioned plea—for he was really impassioned about it—in Penhallow's Florentine drawing-room. Rodman was not without his exquisite appreciation of Penhallow and of the charm of these surroundings. But his pulses leaped with delight in what Norbury represented, and in him—in the full figure of fine lusty young manhood that he was.

He nodded approvingly at Bruce. Creighton's eyes glowed with his approbation.

Old and New Chivalry

Then that there might be no feeling of argument Rodman plunged at once into reminiscence about the Delilah game and some of the known parts it has played in America's politics.

CHAPTER XVIII

PENALTY AND PROFIT

AFTER leaving Mrs. Bristow at her door on Friday evening, Rose and Ansel Rodman and Davy faced southward for a leisurely stroll back to Washington Square.

"I think," declared, Rose "Mrs. Bristow is one of the most charming women I have ever met. We had a memorable afternoon together."

"I wonder what she thinks of me?" Rodman groaned. "I've no words to describe the way I feel!"

It was difficult to find the thing to say that might appease him.

"Oh, come, now!" Rose besought him. "Where's the great harm? Most girls fall in love with Johnny, and perhaps many men fall in love with Emily. Mrs. Bristow has a lot of ripe, sweet wisdom. She probably knows that falling in love and falling out again is a considerable part of 'the profession' to members of it like Johnny and Emily. They're not deep enough in the art of it to be seriously absorbed by that; and unless they've got an engrossing pursuit 'on the side'—as so many of the lesser players have—there isn't

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really much else for them to do but engage in little romances. They play at it prettily—and forget before the next season begins. You know that—and we know it—and why should we think Mrs. Bristow doesn't know it?"

"You're a dear, comforting little person—as you doubtless know also!" Rodman replied. "But I can't help remembering the way Mrs. Bristow looked when she saw her daughter."

"I'll tell you why that was," Rose broke in eagerly. "It isn't just nice of me to tell tales on Emily; but I'm sure she wouldn't mind if she knew it was for your consoling. I don't know why she didn't tell her mother she was going to dine with Johnny; but she didn't. She said she was going to dinner with one of the girls in the company. Mrs. Bristow had told me that. She was a little embarrassed for Emily, I suppose. Or it might even be that she imagined I would think *she* had fabricated the story about the girl in the company! But I hope she would know me better than that!"

This sounded plausible and Rodman tried to salve his remorse with it. But somehow he was not convinced.

"And even if they are serious!" Rose went on. "I don't know much about Emily; but I don't know where Johnny could go to look for a lovelier mother-in-law. And it is not unreasonable to

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suppose Emily may be a good deal like her. And Johnny—! Well, I don't say Johnny's anything like the Rock of Gibraltar or the Laws of the Medes and Persians. But he's certainly a most adorable person; and I don't see how Mrs. Bristow could object to him very strongly."

"Unless she doesn't want Emily to marry an actor," suggested Davy.

"*That* might be!" Rose admitted. "But the impression I have of Mrs. Bristow is that she wouldn't presume to interfere too far in trying to decide what kind of a man could make her daughter happiest."

Davy thought the talk was getting on ground dangerous for Rose; he imagined he could detect a tremor in her voice. She had not mentioned Dudley Prichard's name since Monday afternoon. Davy was consumed with tender concern to know how she felt about Dudley; but he did not feel as if he had a right to ask. Her manner was reassuring. But after the completeness with which, for fifteen years, she had concealed from him her anguish of mind about their father, Davy did not flatter himself that his ability to read behind Rose's manner, or to judge by it her real feelings, was worth very much.

Crossing Herald Square, they continued down Broadway, which was thronged just then with the theatre crowds hastening to the performances.

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None of them ever tired of this sight; but to-night they cared less about it than usual.

"Let's stop a minute," Davy said when he thought he heard that tremor in Rose's voice. "I want to buy some flowers."

They were in front of one of the many florists' shops that line Broadway, vying in number with the candy shops and the rhinestone emporiums. Inside the shop, which presented a gorgeous array of autumn foliage, varicolored chrysanthemums of giant size, American Beauties, violets in thousands, orchids, lilies of the valley, gardenias, and other fashionable favorites, Davy bought a bunch of violets with an orchid of exquisite fragility and loveliness tucked into the heart of the bunch.

"For the sweetest girl I know," he whispered to Rose while the attendant was making change. "Will you wear them?"

Rose's eyes filled. She thought she could understand.

"Davy," she murmured, looking far more than she dared to say, "you're a Shining Preciousness." The appellation was one he had encountered in an Oriental romance and had told her about, knowing she would enjoy it.

Ansel Rodman, too, knew why Davy wanted to express to Rose a special tenderness; and his own eyes were very "shiny" as he stood near the front of the shop apparently absorbed in the

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brilliant display in the window. His mind was busy with "the eternal values," and he was wondering if life, which had dealt tragically with these dear children in many respects, had not compensated them more than handsomely in the quality of devotion to one another which it had developed in them. But there it had also, he had to reflect, entailed its inevitable penalties. Witness the suffering which this present wretchedness was bringing each of them on the other's account, and both of them on Johnny's. And blithe, adorable Johnny, who needed sobering development—as these two did not!—was going his bonny way, care-free. Rodman wished he knew if that were right.

He beamed approvingly on Rose and Davy as they rejoined him.

"That's the value of critical acumen," he declared. "Davy knows he couldn't find a sweeter girl to give violets to."

"That isn't acumen, in Davy," Rose objected, shaking her head. "That's something bigger—it's where his sense of values fails; it's—love. Our Davy is one of those blessed persons who love, not according to our deserts at all, but according to his capacity."

Davy's glasses dimmed. He had to take them off and polish them.

On the way to dinner Rodman had an opportunity to tell Davy that he had seen Bruce Nor-

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bury; that he was to see him again to-morrow at the club.

"Had you—" stammered Davy—"were you—terribly shocked?"

Rodman smiled—a tender, sad, wise little smile. "No, Davy," he answered, "I was not."

"Had you heard it before?"

"I had heard it hinted at—at the time."

"You didn't believe it?"

"I didn't think much about it. I felt thoroughly well assured what kind of a man Lyman Innes had been in his best self—and I knew his best must be his biggest, else he could not have done what he did. I took for granted that he had a weaker self—he was a human being—we all have. The meaner and weaker that other self was, the more credit was due him for his triumphs over it—they must have been many. If he died in penalty for his greatest weakness and not for his finest strength, I could not see that he was less a benefactor. What he had done that was excellent remained done. What was weak in him was interred with his bones. That was how I felt, then. If I could have foreseen how things were to work out, perhaps I should have felt differently—and perhaps I should not—it's hard to say, Davy. I find judgment difficult—oh, terribly difficult! One must be *fair* about benefits—you've had them—from his fame. Perhaps it is

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not right that one should have those only—and no blame. I tell you, Davy, I don't know! One moment I resent, on your behalf, his weakness—think perhaps he might have fought a little harder, for your sakes. Then I find myself wondering! If nobody's to sin, how shall we get our saints? I can't tell, Davy! I used to feel that there were some things I knew. But now—I'm never sure. This is a terrible defect—it blights everything I try to do—I don't know how it came about—I've always tried to understand. But here I'm sixty, Davy, and I can't interpret life—not after all my trying—I can only *feel* it, and—and *love* it—but I can't understand."

Davy was touched, then amazed. There could be no doubt of the sincerity of Rodman's estimate of himself. He thought he was futile. He! Davy had read many an outpouring like this, or comparable to it, in the letters and journals of those who have put the world most profoundly in their debt; he had heard a good many accents of despair from men among his own contemporaries—but he had also heard the reaffirmations of hopefulness which invariably succeeded to them. He had taken for granted that the feeling of futility was always a mood—evanescent. He had felt sure that in the main a man must have some sort of fair realization of his worth to the world. Doubts might assail him briefly. But surely he

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must have his seasons of more than counterbalancing assurance! . . . Thus Davy in his youth had ventured to believe. He had never glimpsed Ansel Rodman so intimately before. It was one of the resultants in the interplay of penalty and profit which so profoundly mystified Rodman, that Davy's sad perplexity was bringing him closer to a big soul's bigness than he had ever been able to approach hitherto.

Rodman walked as far as Tenth Street with them and there left them, saying he wanted to call on one of his artist friends in the Studio Building. In reality, of course, he slipped away because he felt sure that Davy and Rose had much to say to each other and were in the mood for saying it.

Davy told Rose about his talk with Rodman. It had impressed him profoundly. Again he wished he dared ask her something about Prichard—but felt he couldn't.

When they got into the house they found several letters which had come in the afternoon mail. There was one for Rose, on which Davy recognized Prichard's handwriting—it was on the familiar letter-paper of The Players, with the masks of comedy and of tragedy stamped on the envelope's flap. Davy handed it to her, and she took it without a word and carried it into her room where she went ostensibly to remove her hat and coat.

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When she came out she busied herself about putting her precious violets in water, handling them most carefully so as not to let a drop of water fall on the orchid's fragile petals. But Davy thought he could tell that she had been crying.

Rose understood. Davy was not a subtle person, and she could not help being aware of the anxiousness with which he watched her every movement. It did not seem as if she could bear to mention her letter. But she knew how it felt to be in Davy's present state of mind. It wasn't fair to keep him so anxious.

"I had a letter from Dudley," she said falteringly.

Davy didn't know how to reply. "Did you?" he echoed, feeling the foolishness of the question.

She handed it to him to read. It began:

Rose, dear, I am unutterably and intolerably wretched. I have waited four days for word from you. I can't wait any longer. I must see you. Monday was awful. I made a mess of everything. I'm sure I can make myself right with you if you will only give me the chance. Don't be hard on me, dear. You know I can't live without you. 'Phone me this evening at the club. Don't make me spend another sleepless night.

Davy read the letter and handed it back to her. His look was ominous.

"Well?" he said.

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"He is suffering, too," she faltered.

"Suffering! Do you believe that, Rose?"

"Why—don't you?"

"I believe he's suffering for you to call him down here and tell him to go ahead and do whatever he likes—that how you feel about anything is immaterial. That's what he's suffering for! Does he even hint at abandoning what he's about? Not a bit of it! Does he say that his anguish is for what he has made you suffer? I should say not! He's reproaching you for disturbing his self-satisfaction and peace of mind. He says he can't live without you! I can't see that it ought to matter to you whether he does or not. But if he can't, and it *does* matter to you, what has he got to do but deny himself one little chance to 'put it over' as an investigator? What he means is that he won't live, if he can help it, without making you agree to him and to anything he wants to do. Why, he doesn't have to write those articles——"

"If he dropped them some one else would take them up."

"Well, let some one else do it! He can't help that. If he has got any evidence let him destroy it and make revelations at least that much harder for another man!"

Rose wavered. Her heart had been touched by the note's protestations. She had not read it as

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Davy had. She wanted to believe in Dudley; and her tenderness for suffering in any one was very great. But Davy's charges were unanswerable.

"Davy," she sobbed, laying her head against his shoulder, "I'm a fool—a weak fool. But I don't want to be! I know you're right. Don't you let me go near that telephone—will you?"

CHAPTER XIX

HOW EMILY WAITED

WHEN Mrs. Bristow was able to talk to Emily, after her disclosure—which was not until Emily had sobbed herself into a state of exhaustion—she told her, as graphically as she could, the whole story. Olivia was pleading for something dearer to her than life, and her plea was a magnificently impassioned one. She told of her penurious girlhood; of her father's "stroke" and what it entailed upon her; of the frequent bitterness of her heart, because she was so desirous to know life; of Charlie Bardeen's courtship and his ire at the burdens she had to bear; of their marriage, and of how his ire against her burden-bearing died. She told of the sense of desolation that was hers when she realized what Charlie was and would always be, and of how she relinquished any hope of life for herself and put all her fervor of hopefulness into life for her child. She described their situation when Charlie was laid off on account of the strike. She told how she had gone to the Capitol and been given the letters, how she had carried them home and, when her cooking and dish-washing were done, had

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read them, eagerly, interestedly; how Charlie had objected; how she had carried the letters back; and how she had seen Lyman Innes.

Emily was sitting upon the bed now listening intently. Her mother was still crouching beside the cot. She buried her head when she spoke of Lyman Innes and could not raise it for some seconds. Then she went on, commanding herself with difficulty but driven by a desperate necessity. She described those morning hours in the Governor's office. She told of the occasional evenings in the little park. She spoke of the one time when he had been in their home and of the one time when she had been in his.

"He needed me, Emily! Oh, the glory of it! I needed him immeasurably; but he needed me, too. We never complained to each other. He never told me of the poverty of his life, and I never told him of the poverty of mine—we understood!"

She went on, tremblingly, to recall the last day, the last evening. She rehearsed the humiliation of that scene with Charlie.

"What he had heard, or where he had heard it, I have never known—shall never know."

Emily's sympathies were entirely withdrawn from herself now and centered upon her mother. She was swept by a great passion of pity.

"You poor darling!" she wept. "You poor darling!"

How Emily Waited

The tender compassion of her child was sweet to Olivia after all those years of lonely, wistful repression. She yearned to revel in it and to forget, for a while, everything else. But she dared not. What she must do instead was try to make Emily understand the penalty of the love clandestine.

This, though, Emily was unwilling to be made to see.

"I think you know now," Olivia went on, "that love is very sacred to me; that I would rather be ruthless with life—which is mortal—than with love—which is immortal. If I could have paid in my own anguish all the penalty for my love, I should count it as nothing against the ecstasy. But I couldn't pay the price alone, you see. No one can ever assume all the penalty. It imposes itself where it will. We did no actual wrong, Lyman Innes and I, either to ourselves or to any other creature. But because we could not prove that to all the world, we had to be clandestine. And because we were clandestine, the worst was suspected by your father, and would be suspected—indeed, taken for granted!—by any one else who might happen to know of our meetings. Johnny Innes will never believe that our worst crime was concealment! He couldn't believe it! He isn't that kind of a man. If you marry him without telling the truth, and the truth ever comes to light,

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think of the situation you will be in! Johnny may forgive you, but the world won't. If it thinks Johnny married you knowing all, it will despise you both. If it thinks you tricked him, it will visit all its scorn on you. And Johnny, knowing that you did trick him, will have no right to resent its attitude, no ground on which to defend you from it."

Emily was growing dogged again. "It hasn't come out in fifteen years," she said, "and I don't see why we need suppose that it will ever come out."

Her mother looked at her. "Emily," she implored, "believe me, who have suffered so much and who have no desire left except for your happiness. If you marry Johnny with that secret in your heart, you will never know a minute's peace. Every time his mood changes, you will fear that he has found out. Every time any one looks strangely at you, you will be in a panic of apprehension. You think your life, so far, has been hard because of your father's crime. I tell you, if you marry Johnny it will be ten thousand times harder. Your closest relation has always been with me, and you never had need to fear what I might think of you. But when your closest relation in life is with him, and you have always to fear what he would think of you if he knew the truth, what refuge from the world will you have, anywhere?"

How Emily Waited

"I could tell him," Emily answered, "and he needn't tell any one else. If he hates me for what I couldn't help; if it's not true what he said to me about loving me if I were a leper or the hounds of hell were after me, then—then——"

She broke off, unable to finish, to put into words that heart-breaking possibility.

"That would be infinitely better than not telling," Olivia agreed. "But—there's this, Emily; you remember the Mr. Dudley Prichard who was at Johnny's house the evening we went there?"

Emily nodded.

"And you remember that he said he was going to write a history of labor struggles in America?"

"Yes."

"Well, as he said, the biggest and most significant of all those struggles was the one of which Lyman Innes was the central figure. He asked Davy for his father's papers, you'll recall. Now, for one thing, that man Prichard is the type of man who ferrets things out. He has a reputation for getting to the bottom of things."

"But he's in love with Rose! He wouldn't write anything about her father that wasn't nice."

Olivia smiled bitterly. "Perhaps he wouldn't," she assented, "but perhaps he would. However, I thought that when he was talking of what he meant to do, both Rose and Davy showed signs of apprehension. Maybe I imagined it. But

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I believe they *know* something about the reason for their father's death. I don't believe Johnny knows. What he does know now is the other link—the link that connects us with it. . . . Now do you see?"

"See?" cried Emily desperately. "I see that my life, my love, were spoiled for me! That I am helpless! My happiness was jeopardized before I had even learned to know it. And there is nothing I can do to save it! We can't stay here. There'll never be any place where we can stay. What a life to look forward to!"

Olivia waited patiently until Emily's outburst was over. Then, "I have only this to suggest," she said. "Wait! If Dudley Prichard makes any disclosures, they will come before very long; and his making them will take the responsibility out of my hands. For though I think Rose and Davy know, I would hardly dare to take it on myself to tell them, lest I am mistaken about their knowledge. When Johnny learns the truth he can choose. All I ask of you is to wait. I don't ask you to stop loving him or even to stop going with him. You can go freely now. I don't want you to be restrained by any thought of me. I shall be happy knowing that you are together. Only, don't make any pledge, I beg you. Tell Johnny you want to wait. If he really loves you, he'll wait. If he says he can't wait, it's because he

How Emily Waited

doesn't know what love means—but misreads an uglier word for it. Believe me, Emily! I know!"

To this proposition Emily agreed.

It being *matinée* day, Emily had not a great while to wait before seeing Johnny,

She always enjoyed her Saturday afternoons. "Half-hour" was not called in the theatre until 1.45, and between noon and that time Broadway was intensely interesting. Most of the people on it seemed to have the half-holiday spirit. Thousands of them were making a little festivity of luncheon, after which they were going, some to the *matinées*, some to football games, some to golf courses and country clubs, and some to auto rides in the country. Particularly it was a gala time for youth. Hundreds of girls from the boarding-schools and from their homes were abroad in their jauntiest street attire; nearly every one of them wore a bunch of violets or a gardenia or a chrysanthemum. They vied pleasantly with one another in the smartness of their tailored suits, the depth of Irish lace on their jabots, the intensity of somebody's devotion which might, they hoped, be inferred from their corsage bouquets. A girl whose violets had an orchid among them looked pityingly on a girl whose violets had not; and when occasionally a girl flashed by with a large bunch of orchids tied with flowing ribbons of orchid hue, only the Spar-

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tan code of the others enabled them to repress their gasps of envy.

Tons of sweets were sold. Scores of soda fountains purveyed their nectar to celebrants whose pocket-money did not encompass *matinée* tickets and much besides.

Youths were everywhere in evidence—collegians in town for a lark; young apprentices to the business world set free for their weekly half-holiday. The former were joys to behold—and they gave the joy freely, nor allowed any to get by without sharing in it. Their excesses of attire shamed the chorus girls, and their exuberance of manner was enough to make a *soubrette* feel downcast.

Mingled in the throng of shoppers, holiday-makers, and workers out for their nooning were hundreds of theatrical folk on their sauntering way to work. They had breakfasted late; they must dine early. This was their time for sunning themselves before they entered stuffy dressing-rooms in the musty-smelling theatres. It was the delight of the *matinée* crowds to identify favorites among the Thespians. It was the delight of the Thespians to be identified.

Emily dearly loved this Saturday gayety. Even to-day she could not be callous to it. In the room they called home—she and her mother—with the beds unmade, the untasted breakfast cluttering

How Emily Waited

the little table—one resigned one's self easily to tragedy as to the grim fate that waits for all. Out here, in the brilliant autumn sunshine, with laughter and the love of life on every side, one denied the right of tragedy to rule young hearts!—especially old tragedy covered with the ashes of fifteen dead years.

Johnny was at their rendezvous at twelve o'clock. He was radiant. Emily could not tell him then.

"Come on shopping!" he cried.

"Shopping?"

"Sure! We're going to buy an engagement ring."

Johnny had borrowed fifty dollars that morning, from Davy. After the matinée the "ghost walked"—meaning the business manager of the company would knock at Johnny's dressing-room door and leave an envelope containing a hundred and fifty dollars. Johnny had figured that "some ring" could be bought for two hundred.

Emily hung back. "We don't want to announce it—yet," she murmured. "And if I wear a ring——"

"Why don't we want to announce it?"

"Well—mother asked us not to—not to be engaged until we had taken more time to consider."

"Consider? I have considered! I'm through considering. I know what I want. And I want what I want when I want it."

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"I promised—" began Emily faintly.

"You promised me last night that you'd marry me. I supposed you meant it."

"I did—I do—but mother said——"

Johnny turned away. He said nothing.

"She asked us not to be engaged—just yet," Emily went on desperately. "She doesn't mind our being together all we want to, but she thinks we ought not to be hasty—that if we truly love each other we will not mind waiting——"

Johnny made no reply. At the corner of Forty-fourth Street he stopped and lifted his hat. Two girls who were passing recognized him and gave a little gasp of delight. Standing in the noon sunshine, with his head bared, Johnny was undeniably beautiful to behold.

"Whe—where are you going?" Emily faltered.

"I think that, if you'll excuse me, I'll go to The Lambs and see if I have any mail." (Johnny had just come from The Lambs and his mail was in his pocket.)

Emily clutched at him entreatingly.

"And not buy the ring?"

Johnny understood capitulation when he saw it. He yielded forgivingly.

Emily told herself she could manage some way to conceal or to explain the ring.

CHAPTER XX

LUCIUS HAS A PARTY

WHEN Sunday evening came, Lucius wondered whether Catherine would think he was crazy if he asked her out to dine. He had been thinking of her all day and it seemed a long time since he had parted from her—before midnight last night.

He wished that he had asked her where she was in the habit of dining. He might have “happened in” and joined her.

Savory odors were coming up from Wing’s kitchen. If only when Wing spread the dinner table, up here by the hard-coal fire, it might be spread for two! Somewhere, in a wretched little “joint” where only the dispirited go, Catherine would be sitting down to a meal that neither nourished the body nor cheered the soul. He made some mental computations. Davy, in asking Lucius if something could not be done to give Catherine a better chance, had said that it was doubtful if she earned more than six dollars a week. Six dollars! Lucius wondered how much one may spend for dinner when one makes six

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dollars a week. Fifteen cents? Not more, certainly. Even that would be unwarranted extravagance. Ten cents? Was it possible that a girl like Catherine ate ten-cent dinners? Men did, of course—thousands of them every day. But girls? Girls with a mind like hers! With a soul on fire for humanity's help!

Lucius got up out of his Morris chair and strode up and down the room a dozen times. Then he went downstairs and into the kitchen—a place he seldom visited.

Whatever surprise Wing may have felt, he concealed as a Celestial does.

"What you got for dinner, Wing?" Lucius asked, lifting the lid of a pot and peering in.

"Sloup—guma-bo. Fine steak. O'Bri' pota'. Clullyflo'—make Hollandlais—sala'——"

McCurdy checked the enumeration. He understood Wing's curtailed speech: gumbo soup (and oh! how Wing could make it!)—a thick tenderloin steak—potatoes O'Brien (never a sliver too much or too little of chopped peppers in them, nor a shade of false proportion between the fresh green pepper and the pimento)—cauliflower with sauce Hollandaise—a salad; probably French endive, with Wing's unapproachable French dressing, for which he used five kinds of pepper, two kinds of vinegar (for flavoring merely), abundance of oil, and a haunting suspicion of garlic. Then there

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would be the coffee percolator, bubbling and sending forth a perfume that would tempt an anchorite. Lucius drank little—almost none at all when alone; but after he had had his coffee, and had lighted his cigar, he would probably pour himself a tiny cordial glassful of cognac or Benedictine or Chartreuse, appreciating, as he did so, the liquid gold of it in the brilliant rock crystal glass. Then, with the glow of it sensible all through him, he would sit and smoke and blow out fairy rings——

No! he would *not*! Not with that ten-cent dinner haunting him.

“How long?” he asked Wing—meaning how long till dinner would be ready.

“Hlaf-hour?” answered the Celestial with a rising inflection intended to denote that he hoped that time would be satisfactory.

“Could you make it an hour?”

He could. Nothing was under way except the soup.

“Is there enough for three?”

Wing nodded. He knew his master’s impulsiveness too well ever to make close calculations. And if there were much left, one had never to look far for hungry mouths that would welcome it—and gratefully remember.

“Wait! I’ll tell you in a minute.”

With the impetuosity of a boy, Lucius dashed upstairs to the telephone.

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Rose answered.

"Who's there?" Lucius asked her when he had made sure she knew to whom she was talking.

"Oswald Seever and Sam Hamilton and Davy and I."

"Do you want to do me the biggest favor that anybody ever did?"

"Why, of course I do—if I can."

"Will you come down here to dinner—to-night?"

"Is that the biggest favor——?"

"It is, Rose! I can't tell you over the 'phone, but I will when I see you. I want to ask Miss Krakopfsky here, and I know she wouldn't come alone. I'm frank, you see! But I'm sure you'll forgive me when I tell you why I ask. Those three fellows can eat their salad without you!"

"Hold the wire a minute and I'll see," she answered.

When she explained to the three men they urged her to go.

"I'll come," she told Lucius. "Does Catherine know?"

"That's the deuce of it," he admitted. "I just thought of this, and got Wing to put off dinner for an hour. And it's such a beastly distance up to Twenty-fourth Street. I'll 'phone a taxi to be at your house in twenty minutes, and I'll be there by that time. Good-by!"

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Rose dressed the salad and laid out the accompaniments for their simple supper so the men could serve themselves without difficulty. Then she got herself ready and when Lucius rang she called down to him:

"Don't come up—I'll be there in a jiffy."

"I'm awfully sorry I can't ask you all," he apologized. "Ask Davy to come down after a while, if he can."

"I will."

She whispered his message to Davy when she kissed him good-by.

Lucius was in a fever of impatience which he tried to explain to her as best he could while they were whirling over to Third Avenue and Twenty-fourth Street.

Rose was intensely sympathetic, as he had known she would be.

"I—I felt a beast to sit down to that dinner alone," Lucius explained. "I've done it often, of course, but it was—different. I knew there were men who were hungry; and I cared, of course. But a girl! I never thought before about the girls. She told me so many things last night—we were down around Grand Street—Creighton was with us—I hadn't even realized how it is for a girl—a girl such as she is! I—I got to thinking of her eating a ten-cent dinner, and I—well, I felt sure you'd understand."

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"I do!" Rose assured him—meaning more than he supposed she meant. "And I'm glad you thought of me. If Catherine isn't home, I shall be *so* disappointed!"

She was not at home. Lucius had begged Rose to go up alone and ask. He knew Catherine had no place to ask him into, and he hated to embarrass her. "Just say you were—were coming down to dine with me," he suggested, "and you—you thought you'd like to pick her up for a—a chaperone."

Under cover of the cab's friendly dusk, Rose dared to smile.

"All right," she answered.

But Catherine was not there.

Mollie was, however, and she was overjoyed to see Rose.

"I came to see Catherine this time," Rose explained. "But I'm always glad to see you, you know. Have you any idea where Catherine is?"

"I s'pose she's gone to 'er dinner," Mollie opined.

"Was Sonia with her?"

"No'm—she had a date."

"A what?"

"A date—a bid off'n a fella—a swell fella, she tol' me.—But she don't want Cath'rine to know. Don't yeh tell 'er, will yeh? Cath'rine says no swell fella could mean good t' the likes o' them. They're jest amusin' theirselves, she says."

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"When did she tell you that?"

"She told it to me this very day."

"Do you know where she goes to eat?"

"I know some places where she goes."

"Will you show me?"

"Sure I will."

Mollie was ecstatic when she got downstairs and saw the taxi. "Oh, gee!" she cried.

At least a score of children were there to see her get in.

"Look at Mollie!" they shrilled. "Ain't she puttin' on lugs? Who's yer Vanderbilt frien's?"

Mollie loved the mild sensation so much, that it was not in Rose or Lucius to regret it.

"Tell 'im to go 'round on Secon' Avena," she directed, "an' w'en we come to the place, I'll holler out. She eats here more'n any place."

In a moment after they had turned into Second Avenue; Mollie "hollered," and they drew up in front of what Mollie called "a eat shop."

The front of it had once been painted white—but that was long ago. Outside stood signs the size that "sandwich men" carry, the long legends on them reading:

Pork Chops, 10c

Small Steak 10c

Ham and Eggs 15c; etc.

Potatoes, bread, butter, and coffee, tea or milk, included.

Coffee and 3 rolls or doughnuts, 5c.

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The windows were multitudinously fly-specked—memorials of last summer's flies—but the food they displayed had doubtless grown inured to specks before it got there. There was a mound of pork chops in one of the windows, and a few heads of exceedingly limp leaf-lettuce, a half-dozen tomatoes, several cans of "sugar corn," and an altitudinous pile of doughnuts, flanked by a row of pies and two bottles of yellow salad dressing.

Within, there was a long counter on one side of the room and a row of tables, each seating four, on the other side. A dozen men and boys were perched upon stools before the counter, eating hungrily. At the tables, which were spread with villainously dirty cloths and set with the thickest white stoneware, were more than a score of persons: girls, alone and in couples; middle-aged men and women, invariably alone and looking as if they never knew what it was to eat a social meal even for ten cents; and one young fellow with a girl, evidently his "friend"—both of them hard-working youngsters, doubtless, and denizens of a cheap lodging somewhere in the vicinity; each of them had been intolerably alone, no doubt, and they had crept together for a bit of companionship of a sort unhallowed, but surely not unpardonable where all is understood.

Lucius would not allow Rose to go in alone, and he thought that one person entering on a quest

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would create less stir than two or three, so he went, leaving Rose and Mollie in the cab.

"He's a swell guy, ain't he?" Mollie commented when his back was turned. "Does he know Cath'rine?"

"He met her at my house a week ago," Rose answered. "And he isn't a swell. He's a hard-working young lawyer, and he lives on the East Side, 'way down near Chinatown."

"He don't look it!" Mollie observed shrewdly. "No more'n your brother does—the one I give Goitie Moiphy to."

"Who taught you the poem about Goitie?"

"A fella Sonia knows. He's awful funny. He knows all kin' o' things like that. Cath'rine says he reads 'em in the *Joinal* an' hears 'em in the cheap shows. She don't like him much. But Sonia does. Cath'rine's all for books—but Sonia's pretty."

Rose was impressed by Mollie's "but"; it expressed unmistakably what she thought of books and beauty. Catherine tried to find consolation, entertainment, life in books—"but Sonia's pretty." Life was hers by divine right.

Lucius was diffident about entering. He could not help being aware that he looked sufficiently unlike its patrons to be an object of curiosity there.

He glanced quickly down the line of tables.

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Catherine saw him, and half rose from her seat, her cheeks burning.

There was a vacant seat across from her, and he motioned her that he would take it.

"Miss Innes is outside—in a cab—" he began bashfully. "She said she would come down and dine with me if I could get you to come, too. We went to your house, and Mollie brought us here."

"I—I have just ordered my dinner," she faltered.

"Couldn't you—donate it to some one?" he ventured.

An elderly woman had sat down beside Catherine, but her order was not yet taken. She could not help overhearing the conversation.

"I'll take your order," she offered. "I guess there ain't so much variety in 'em here but what I can make out with one's well's with another."

She seemed to understand and to sympathize. Her manner said: "Jest you go 'long an' have your little treat—mebbe the day'll come all too soon when you'll be like me, an' nothin' 'll ever happen to you."

Catherine thanked her heartily—and went.

"Oh, I'm so glad we found you!" Rose cried delightedly, when Lucius and Catherine appeared at the cab door. Now that Catherine was found, though, Rose was thinking of Mollie. She knew how Mollie would feel, being "dropped" in a min-



"Miss Innes is outside—in a cab—" he began bashfully

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ute, and thanked, and dismissed—to the company of the “step-” and the gilded horse.

“Lucius,” she said, leaning forward in the car. “I’ve got to do a dreadfully rude thing—I must whisper to you. I know the others will pardon me.”

Lucius inclined an ear and Rose whispered: “If Mollie *could* go, she could eat my share.”

He patted the hand she had laid on his knee to steady herself while the taxi lurched.

“Mollie,” he said, “if you would honor us, we’d be delighted to have you go along.”

“The honor’s mine,” declared Mollie promptly.

They all laughed.

“Ain’t it right?” she inquired anxiously. “They say it in the theayter.”

Lucius had misgivings as to his dinner from Mollie’s point of view. He told the driver to go over to Fourth Avenue and stop at Horton’s, where he got out and acquired ice-cream and cake.

Catherine could not say much. Her heart was beating tumultuously, and she was painfully self-conscious. Lucius was thrilled with the sense of a delicious adventure. Rose had never seen him in so gay a mood. More than once, in the kindly dark, her own eyes filled; but she winked the tears resolutely away. The shallowness and selfishness of Dudley’s affection had hurt her much more deeply than any one she knew was able to

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understand. Most people think that the discovery of a man's unworthiness ought to make it easy for a woman who has loved him to put him out of her heart. It ought to, but it doesn't—always.

Wing's dinner was perfection, and Mollie's approval of the Æolian and the Victrola was without stint.

While the impromptu concert was in progress, Wing announced a caller.

Lucius was annoyed. "Who is it?" he asked, frowning.

"Ol' mlan—glirl gone," Wing answered.

"All right—I'll see him," he told the Celestial. "It's the man who was here the night you and Davy and Creighton dined here," he went on, addressing Rose. "He haunts me—poor soul! Seems to think there is something I could do. But I've done all I can."

When he was gone, Rose explained to Catherine about the caller. Mollie was absorbed in the Victrola and could hear nothing else—not, however, that any one need have been shy about discussing harlotry before Mollie; she was used to it.

In a few minutes Lucius reappeared. "I wonder," he said, looking at Catherine, "if this isn't a case for you? He knows now where his girl is, but he can't get her to come home. Would you talk to him? I told him I had a party of

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guests upstairs, and among them one who—who could help him far more than I could.”

“At least I can try,” Catherine responded.

Rose and Mollie continued to make music. After fifteen minutes or thereabouts, Rose heard the street door close. But Lucius and Catherine did not come upstairs.

It was an hour later when Davy rang, and they came up bringing him with them.

“That poor old man, who was here the other night when you were, came again,” Lucius was explaining to Davy, “and Miss Krakopfsky was good enough to go down and talk to him. He’s just gone.”

“Just”! Oh, telltale little word! Rose knew what it meant when an hour sped by on wings as of the wind.

She looked at Lucius and at Catherine. They were both illumined as with some inner shining. Did Catherine believe now that swell fellows “only amuse themselves” with poor girls? And could it be possible that Lucius was, even thoughtlessly, capable of such cruelty?

Davy was glad to see Catherine. He had something that he was eager to tell her.

“I was talking about you to Mary Todd,” he said. “You know? She’s one of the cleverest women in the country—writer, editor, social investigator. She says she doesn’t see why you

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couldn't learn proof-reading. It would pay you well—twenty dollars a week, anyway—and would bring you in contact with people who would appreciate you and whom you would find companionable; that is, if we could find for you—as Miss Todd thinks we could—a place in one of the smaller editorial offices. It's an excellent way to work into something else—like manuscript reading or the like of that. Stenography and proof-reading are the two best 'wedges' for entering editorial work."

"How could I learn to read proof?"

Davy flushed. "I—if you would allow me, I should be so glad to show you—evenings," he offered shyly.

Catherine looked her gratitude. She dared not try to speak it.

"Do you think I can learn?" she murmured.

"Why, there's almost nothing to learn—for you," he declared.

And then he went on to quote the time-honored joke about the qualifications of a proof-reader, who must be "an individual of wide culture, familiar with French, German, Italian, Latin, and Greek; educated in the sciences; expert in geography; facile in classical allusions; versed in mythology; keen to detect the smallest error in quotations from the standard authors; infallible in spelling; inexorable in matters of English prose style; thoroughly posted on contemporaneous per-

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sonages and problems"; and so on and so on, *ad infinitum*. This, he explained, is what a really good proof-reader should be. But the difficulty of commanding all those gifts and graces at "twenty per" made the really good ones evolve all too rapidly out of proof-reading and into college presidencies, "where, I doubt not," he concluded gallantly, "you will presently be found."

Catherine looked a little dazed, as if unable to make up her mind whether this were real or some kind of jest. But Davy's manner was completely reassuring.

"When do you want to begin?" he asked.

"To-morrow," she answered quietly.

Lucius was abundantly satisfied with the success of his party.

CHAPTER XXI

THE NIGHT COURT

WING got a "night off" on Monday. Lucius had an engagement in the Cherry Hill district, but he couldn't bear the thought of dining alone at home. It was even less endurable after he had seen that place where Catherine ate than it had been before. He dined at Hahn's, and went about his business—his mind up at Washington Square where a first lesson in proof-reading was scheduled to be going on. Tuesday evening he had a banquet to attend. Catherine had said that she would dine with him on Wednesday, so Wing got another night off.

Lucius came home before going up to Twenty-fourth Street, and while he was "brushing up a bit," as he called a rather prolonged uncertainty over neckties, word came to him that his most persistent caller was downstairs.

The old man had heard from his girl. She was under arrest.

"She got some wan t' tilliphone me," he sobbed. "She was tuk up this afternoon, in Fifteent' Strate about four o'clock."

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"She'll be at the night court," Lucius said. "I'll be there. Now, don't worry. This is probably the very best thing that could have happened to her. I'll see the Judge and tell him about her. You be there—Jefferson Market—Sixth Avenue and Tenth Street—at nine o'clock."

Lucius took Catherine to a place on East Twenty-first Street, where they had an Italian table-d'hôte of the usual inexpensive sort, and where Catherine's shabbiness was not likely to be in uncomfortable contrast to the gowning of the other women present.

Lucius was not addicted to the table-d'hôte. There was not one in all New York to which he would have gone as a matter of personal preference. But to-night he was more than pleased with his dining. What he ate mattered little to him. What made the occasion memorable was that for the first time he was sitting across a table from Catherine—just they two together out of all the world.

Catherine wore a clean white shirt-waist; it was cheap and coarse and ill-fitting, but it was freshly laundered (by herself on Sunday), and she looked attractive because she was happy. Her shabby suit was not poor enough to obtrude itself; one overlooked it, naturally, and saw her radiant face instead. She was too instinctively a lady to wear a distressful hat—she had, in fact, no fall hat yet,

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but her black straw sailor was genteel and becoming. She was unhappily conscious at times of her work-roughened hands; but her absorption in the conversation left her few intervals for self-consciousness.

They lingered as long as they could over their meal, then went down the stoop and turned west in Twenty-first Street.

It was not quite eight o'clock.

"If we walk along slowly," he said, "we'll just about get there at 8.30 or so—in time to have a little talk with the Judge and with our Aggie Donahue, if she's there."

"Won't she surely be there?"

"Almost surely, if she was arrested for the reason we suppose. But it's impossible to know exactly when she'd be brought in there. They send the prisoners along when they get a load. She may have been taken there direct. Donahue didn't say what part of Fifteenth Street she was arrested in."

Aggie was there—in the women's pen. (Separate court for women was not yet instituted.)

There were perhaps a dozen women and girls sitting in the pen when Lucius and Catherine went up to the bars.

The pen was about fourteen feet square, and a narrow wooden bench ran around three sides of it. The walls were of whitewashed stone, and the

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pen was well lighted with electricity. Next to it was the receiving pen for male prisoners.

One of the women in the cell with Aggie was dead drunk. Several times her fellow-prisoners had picked her up off the stone floor and laid her on the bench; but she always rolled off again. She was a middle-aged white woman in a calico wrapper—hatless and coatless. The probability was that she was an otherwise respectable woman, a tenement-house mother with “the failing.” Perhaps her children were frenziedly seeking her; perhaps they were not too particular whether she came home or not.

There was a big negress, exhilarated from recent snuffing of “coke” (cocaine); she would be morose and terribly troublesome before morning. A woman arrested for shoplifting was weeping hysterically. An emaciated creature charged with violation of the tenement-house act was giving vent, spasmodically, to bursts of shrill despair. “I got a sick kid at home!” she wailed. “What if I done it? Who wouldn’t have—with a sick kid, and not a cent, and only one way to get it—only one way!”

The other prisoners were girls—black and white, Jew and Gentile, new to prison and hardened to the brief inconvenience of arrest. They were all there on one of two charges. Some were defiant; some were indifferent. Aggie was frightened.

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An officer stepped with Lucius and Catherine to the grating.

"Agnes Donahue," he called.

Aggie came, trembling, to the bars.

Lucius told her who he was, introduced Catherine, and told why they had come.

"If I plead with the Judge to let you off, Aggie, what are you going to do?"

"I ain't goin' t' do it again!" she sobbed, leaning against the steel bars and weeping bitterly.

"Ain't going to do what?" he echoed.

"What I—what I done that I got pinched fer? I didn' know ye could git pinched fer it."

"You mean you're not going to solicit on the streets again?"

She nodded.

"But will you go back home and try to be a good girl?" he went on.

Aggie lifted her head defiantly. "No, I won't!" she replied. "I've had enough of it there."

"Then why did you telephone your poor old father?"

"My por ol'——!"

"That's all right!" he interrupted her. "I know what you mean. He's done wrong—but he had some cause; and there's good in him. He's been like a madman since you went. You've done wrong, but you had some cause, too—not so much as he had, though, because you had youth,

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and health, and hope; and he had nothing. You've got good in you, too—yet; but you won't have any left soon, if you keep on this way. If you won't go home, will you try to live decent if I get you a place to work?"

"I can get myself a place to work," she replied ungraciously. "But what's the use? There ain't no place where I could get more'n five or six dollars—because I ain't *worth* no more'n five or six dollars, and I know it as well as any one. And when you try to live on that, what d'ye get? Starvation—no clo'es—no fun—no place to ast a fella to—no place to enjoy yourself. What's the use?"

"I work for six a week," returned Catherine.

Aggie regarded her uninterestedly. "Yer welcome to it!" she answered curtly.

They left her and went back to the court-room to see if the Judge had come. While waiting for him, they talked about Aggie to the probation officer, a kindly intelligent woman of middle-age and wide experience, who investigated the cases of girls and women brought into court and did what she could to further the administration of justice by reporting on the environment of erring women, so that the court might judge with more understanding their deficiencies and know which of them should be committed to reformatory institutions and which released on probation to have another chance.

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The work was a step in the right direction and undoubtedly did great good. It would have done more good if it could have been done more thoroughly—if the apportionment for it had been ten times as great as it was.

The probation officer was only too sadly familiar with Aggie's type and Aggie's attitude toward life.

"There isn't, really, anything that can be done for her," she said. "She's convinced that this is the only way for her to have fun—and a willow plume—and there can't any one do anything to stop her. They're seldom sent up for a first offense. If she gets a good scare now, it may keep her off the streets. But when they're in that frame of mind there can't anybody keep them out of the life. Cases like hers are beyond the reach of courts, except to punish."

"And yet," cried Catherine hotly, "who can blame her?"

"No one—who knows," the older woman answered.

"I was reading, the other day," Catherine went on, "a little book containing John Ruskin's letters to Mary Gladstone. In the introduction to the volume there was an anecdote of the first visit of Ruskin to Hawarden Castle. A man had just been hanged thereabouts for some dreadful crime, and Ruskin said that if laws were as they should be it would have been the best man of the com-

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munity who paid the penalty for the worst man's crime. Gladstone could not agree to this. He was too practical a politician." She glanced mischievously at Lucius.

"We need our best men—alive," he demurred. "But I sympathize with what Ruskin said—in a measure, at least."

The probation officer nodded approvingly. "There are many who should answer when Aggie's case is called," she opined. "She is the victim of many people's selfishness and neglect. It is not fair that she should bear the consequences alone."

"I hate to face Donahue," Lucius confessed.

He was there when they re-entered the courtroom—a twisted and bent wreck of a man, heart-rendingly repentant, anxious.

"And ye can't do a thing?" he cried in anguish. "My God! Not a thing?"

Lucius tried to explain. "There's nothing there to get hold of," he said; "nothing to appeal to but a love of fun. And I don't know how we can promise her that. She admits that she can't hope to earn it for herself—except in one way."

"Fun," sobbed Donahue. "No, she never had much. An' she ain't got the eddication to earn more'n what'll kape 'er alive. The thing that maimed me, maimed her, too!"

Lucius and Catherine turned away, unable to bear the sight of his distress.

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"Creighton ought to be here," Lucius murmured. "This would be another text for him to plead from."

The Judge told Aggie she might go free if she would go home with her father. It was only a well-meant ruse; if she went home, perhaps she could be persuaded to stay. If she didn't stay, the court could not rearrest her for leaving nor compel her to go back.

Aggie consented—in a way that inspired no one with hopefulness.

She and her father, Lucius and Catherine, left the court-room together and walked east through Tenth Street.

Tearfully, Catherine pleaded with Aggie.

"If I help you," she entreated, "won't you try it for a month—a fortnight? I'll ask my friends to help—we'll all do all we can for you. We know you've had a hard time—we'll try to make it pleasanter."

"Who are you?" demanded Aggie, "that you should care?"

"Who am I," returned Catherine, "that I should *not* care? Many people care, Aggie—everybody ought to care. You can't live unto yourself alone. Nobody can."

Yielding to much persuasion, Aggie promised to try the decent life again.

At Broadway, Lucius and Catherine turned

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their faces uptown, and said good-by to Donahue and his daughter.

The moon, nearing its full, was riding high over the white Gothic spires of Grace Church. On the corner where for so many years the Bread Line had stood was the beautiful new outdoor pulpit built for the preaching of the Word to the masses who would not come within the church.

The stillness of lower Broadway at night lay over everything. The St. Denis Hotel was across the street, but it contributed no more liveliness to the scene than did Grace Church and its rectory.

A block uptown, where McCreery's old downtown store used to be, Fleischmann's successor now had his Vienna bakery. It was too early yet for the Bread Line. But an hour hence they would begin to come. At midnight there would be a long, sinuous line of them, stretching from the side door to Broadway, and up the west side of Broadway for nearly or quite a block. It would be late when the last ones got their bread and coffee; but they would get it. Some persons decry this charity. But the fame of Fleischmann's Bread Line has travelled far—much farther than the name of the magnificent Gothic pile under whose shadow the hungry used to huddle and wait for alms—for bread broken by a Jew and offered to the needy without a question. It was a pity

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when the Bread Line moved—even to make way for other preaching of the Word.

Lucius and Catherine walked on, commenting on these things and revelling in the beauty of the night.

At Union Square they cut across diagonally to Fourth Avenue, and followed its quiet reaches until they came to Twenty-fourth Street. The benches of Union Square were well filled with homeless men and a few women—mostly well on in years, and homeless, too. Some of them would sit there all night.

“I wonder,” Lucius mused, “if you and I will live to see the millennium when these things shall have ceased to be?”

“Not all of them—but some, perhaps,” she answered. “And oh! to have a part in bringing it about! How can there be any one who does not long to work for it?”

“If only they could know you!” he whispered. “You would inspire any one.”

Lucius was perfectly well aware of the objections with which his avowal of interest in Catherine would meet. He knew in about which quarters the objection would be active opposition and in which it would be passive neglect. He had reviewed the prospect thoroughly, and had promised himself very solemnly that he would not be rash; that he would take plenty of time and

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make sure he knew what he was doing—before doing it.

But here was a woman who had power to thrill him as no woman else had ever had—and Lucius was sufficiently susceptible to feminine charm. The girls of his own world wooed him assiduously; he was a present prize and potentially a magnificent “risk”—prescient papas said there was practically no limit to what Lucius might attain, politically. But Lucius was mindful of those girls’ training. They might be very charming, gracious mistresses of an Executive Mansion—if he should be elected to one some fifteen years hence. In the meantime, though, what could he hope for from them? They would not approve of Cherry Hill; they would not understand his absorbing interest there; they would grudge the amount of time he had to give to “ways and means” that touched the world of their concerns not at all. There would be a polite marriage which was in effect no marriage at all, and he would go his way as he was going now; only it would be harder, because there would be a continual nagging of feminine opposition.

Lucius was impetuous in little things, but he was shrewd about major affairs. He loved women, and often felt the need of a woman’s cheer and the inspiration of her belief in him. But he surmised—quite accurately, no doubt—just about

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how long after marriage the gushing enthusiasm of those butterfly girls for his life as he had mapped it out would last.

Then Catherine came. He could scarcely realize how recent her coming had been, she had filled his thoughts so much, these ten days past.

Here was a woman who would love Cherry Hill; who would not only sympathize with his interest in it, but would continually be opening up to him new phases of its life, its needs. She would have intense, vital concern in every step of his way—down here. But a part of his way lay quite elsewhere. The strength of his position depended on the hold he maintained on two important elements: the popular vote and the sinews of war. His uptown affiliations were as important as his downtown associations. And uptown, how would Catherine fare? Against this, though, there were two things to be considered: one was that, if Catherine could not go with him into those uptown experiences, she was not the girl to hold him back from them nor to grudge his going; and the other was that a good part of his relations with uptown could safely be, from now on, with men exclusively. He had got past the stage where country houses and cotillions were useful to him. The men who held the purse-strings knew about him now, and were as likely to seek him out as he was to seek them. They had their eyes on him.

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Banquets were a large factor in the career that Lucius had embarked upon. Clever—but not too clever!—after-dinner speaking was one of his big assets as much as clever platform speaking was. A man who looked ahead along the way Lucius meant to travel did not see many fireside evenings in prospect; had not much to offer any woman unless she were of a kind to be absorbed in the daily steps of his progress.

All this Lucius kept well in mind. And yet as he and Catherine sauntered up Fourth Avenue and, with all their lingering, approached her street with what seemed to them both an unseemly haste, he found that he had but one idea, and that was to get from her some definite promise about when he might see her again.

The first lesson in proof-reading, she told him, had gone excellently. Davy had made an arrangement with the boy who struck off on the hand-press proofs for the proof-room to run off an extra proof of certain galleys. These he would save until the copy from which they were printed was thrown aside, and then edited copy and uncorrected proofs were to go daily through Davy to Catherine. Davy had explained linotype setting to her, so she might understand "the exigencies of cast lead," he told her. But some night soon he was going to take her to the composing-room of one of the morning papers (Davy's paper was

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published in the afternoon) and let her see type set and read for correction, and stereotyped and put on the great rotary presses. To this expedition she was looking forward eagerly. Also, she was to be introduced to Miss Todd—next Sunday evening, if Miss Todd could come to the Inneses' then.

Lucius felt a pang of envy of all the Inneses were able to do for Catherine. And he could do nothing!—neither for her present comfort nor for her advancement in the future.

“With all this in prospect, when am I to see you again?” he asked rather crossly—like a man who feels that his rights are being invaded.

Catherine's mouth trembled. “When?” As if there could be anything in all the world that could keep her elsewhere if she knew he wanted her! She was afraid to answer lest this that was in her mind get into her voice also and betray her. And she, too, had done her thinking! If Lucius McCurdy ever spoke word of love to her, it should not be through pity because he realized that she loved him.

Her silence nettled Lucius.

“Catherine!” he cried, “I want you! I need you! I want you for my own!”

Catherine put her hand out as if to steady herself, and gripped his arm.

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"Not—?" She lifted her eyes and looked into his.

He read her anguished questioning—and it hurt.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I didn't think you'd misunderstand."

"Forgive me," she entreated. "I—it seemed *too* wonderful."

In the dark hallway of her tenement, she let him hold her for an instant in his arms. Her heart was beating so wildly he could feel it against his own.

"You flutter like a frightened bird," he whispered; "but you've come *home*—my Catherine."

A door in the upper hall opened and steps were heard approaching the stairs.

Catherine lifted her face to his for one more kiss, then sped away from him—up to her little room whose walls seemed too frail to-night to contain this great flood of happiness she was bringing with her.

Lucius did not fall asleep until well on toward dawn. At seven o'clock he was awakened by the telephone bell.

Imprecating the disturber, he took down the receiver.

"Who is it?" some one asked.

"Catherine!" he cried.

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"Yes. I am crazy, Lucius—mad. Sonia did not come home. I have been up all night—and she hasn't come."

"I'll be with you in half an hour," he answered. "Try not to worry, dearest. Thank God, I've got some power in this town."

CHAPTER XXII

“ANY FOOL CAN DESTROY”

EMSTEAD was a hard man to catch. For one thing, he did a deal of flying about the country, getting in touch with national interests; and for another thing, when he was in town, his office was continually under siege by a multitude of persons who wanted to get his ear.

He had been to Seattle to see some men who knew things about the Alaska frauds that he could not find out in the East. He left New York the afternoon after his talk with Dudley Prichard about the labor series. At 8.30 the next morning Emstead was in Chicago, where he saw a dozen persons before leaving, at 6.30, for St. Paul. In St. Paul he ferreted around and satisfied himself on certain points concerning Great Northern and the freight tariffs on wheat. Sunday he was in Seattle. Tuesday night he left there for 'Frisco. Thursday and Friday he spent in 'Frisco, talking over the city's fight to free itself from gang rule; Tuesday he was back in Chicago. There he found a night message from Ansel Rodman—"Wire on

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what train you're leaving. I'm coming up road to meet you. Business conference."

Emstead replied that he was going to Pittsburg on the eighteen-hour limited; would leave there Wednesday night. This would bring him into New York early on Thursday morning—so early that Rodman, getting on at Philadelphia, could not hope to find Emstead awake. So Rodman went to Pittsburg; and in the drawing-room of the sleeper he and Emstead sat up all the way to Harrisburg talking.

Emstead's office was a busy place on Thursday. Every one who had been waiting two weeks and a half to see him wanted to get to him at once.

Emstead believed in the good-will of as many people as he could conciliate without unworthy compromise; so he didn't keep an office boy. No flippant youth or disinterested girl received callers at the offices of *Emstead's Magazine*. It was strictly against instructions that any one who came there should be made to feel unimportant to the magazine. Magazines need all the good-will they can get and keep. The competition among them is keen. There are never enough writers or artists of the first class to go 'round among the editors who must have first-class stuff. There is never any way of telling from what futile-seeming caller one may get the suggestion for a big "feature." Emstead had once listened patiently to a

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woman who wanted to write for him a series of articles on “Eminent Women of Modern Times.” Somewhere in her maunderings he caught something that gave him an idea for one of the most sensationally successful features his magazine had ever had. It was a theory of his that writers, as they wax proficient in the technique of their craft, have a tendency to seek surroundings that are pleasant rather than purposeful; that is, as they get the better able to say things, they incline to have fewer things to say. He believed that it is a large part of an editor’s business to associate with people and know what’s in the minds of many men; then, from among the little group of persons who know how to write, to choose the likeliest one for the handling of any particular theme. “I have,” Emstead would say illustratively, “an idea that the public—or a large part of it—would welcome some articles on the preparations Germany is indubitably making for war. I have some startling intimations, from reliable sources, about those preparations and the imminence of that war. In my mind, I rapidly run over the list of men who could conceivably do anything with such a commission as I purpose giving. When I have concluded which of them is likeliest, I tell some one about the office to locate him for me and get him on the ’phone. ‘What have you got to do this afternoon?’ I ask him. Well, he was going to

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play squash—probably. (I never knew anything like the propensity of these successful knights of the pen for playing squash. What *is* squash, anyway?) But he will come to see me if I want him to. He comes. I lay before him the outline of the German scheme. In half an hour he's as crazy as a loon, and can't wait for the first German ship to sail. He'll do great work. But if I hadn't dug up the idea, he would have gone on playing squash till he ran out of money. That's editing."

In consequence of his belief in the possible value to his magazine of any one who might come along, Emstead kept in his reception-room a dignified messenger, white-haired and courtly, who knew "Who's Who" by heart and everybody in it by sight; and who had a pride in following those instructions which bade him make even messenger boys glad to come to the Emstead offices with an electro to be used in advertising.

This man had a busy day on Thursday after Mr. Emstead's absence of more than two weeks. Obviously, all these people could not see Mr. Emstead on a single day, even if the Chief had not that great accumulation of mail and of office matters to attend to. Yet Allison handled the claims with supreme diplomacy, making firm but flatteringly regretful denials to some, temporizing with others, and so on.

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When Dudley Prichard came in, Allison told him that he knew Mr. Emstead was hoping to see him, but that unfortunately, at that moment, there was a French scientist in Mr. Emstead's office. If Mr. Prichard would be good enough to wait, he would find some gentlemen whom he knew in the reception-room.

Prichard nodded agreeably and passed into the inner room, hung with paintings by notable American illustrators and with framed fragments of manuscript by celebrated American writers. The furniture of this room was mahogany, in a choice Chippendale design. The floor was hard-wood, highly polished, and on it was a handsome Oriental rug. The library table contained recent copies of *Emstead's* and some of the New York morning papers. A handsome “art glass” dome hung above it, and cast a softened light. A grandfather clock in one corner ticked sonorously.

Prichard found here two men he knew: Sam Hamilton and Will Crowninshield. Like himself, they had both been newspaper men. Hamilton was truly famous—that seemed hardly too big a word—as a war correspondent; considering his youth—he was just forty—and these piping times of peace, he had seen no inconsiderable amount of warfare and of the earth's surface. He was a vastly entertaining chap; there was none in New

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York who could spin a prettier yarn about a greater variety of experiences.

Will Crowninshield was press agent to a multimillionaire and to the trust with which this millionaire was most prominently identified.

"Hello, Will!" Dudley greeted him. "What's new? Getting ready for a new ten-million-dollar conservation fund?"

Crowninshield took the jibes of his confrères with smiling equanimity. He felt that he could afford to. He wasn't getting any glory out of his job, but he was getting a fairly excellent "where-withal," and he was also getting valuable tips about investing what he didn't spend. He meant to work for glory by and by.

He was the first of the three in line to see Emstead. After he had gone, Prichard and Hamilton discussed his job with humorous appreciation.

"Poor old Will!" mused Dudley, reminiscently. "He has his ups and downs, like the elevator boy. I remember the time his boss was getting ready to announce that enormous donation he made to endow a foundation for something or other. Will selected the time for the announcement with infinite care—picked out a dull season in the newspaper world—just after Christmas—when the most exciting thing in the papers was the advertising of pre-inventory clearance sales. He had it doped out that his story was good for at least two

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columns on the front page of every daily in the land. And he had the stuff landed with the Associated Press, when along comes Messina with a pretty little earthquake—and puts the donation story into a stickful of type somewhere in the mazes of page three. Talk about the fortunes of *war!*”

Hamilton laughed. “I’ll bet Will’s Crœsus blamed him for the earthquake!” he said. “I wonder if Will will ever have the nerve to write his memoirs. Gee! What a chance! But I don’t think he’s got the humor for it. Seever and I were up to the Inneses’ Sunday night”—Prichard winced, but Hamilton did not notice it—“and Os was telling about his paper. He says that practically every millionaire in the country has some kind of protection there—except two—brothers. It’s ‘hands off’ for everybody else. But if you come down to the office with a spleen that you have just *got* to vent on some plutocrat, you may vent it on either of these brothers. He says they have no end of fun about it in the office. Davy told us about a side-show he saw at Coney Island this summer. There were two wire cages. In each was a water-tank perhaps eight feet deep. About three feet above each tank was a bar of wood on which a coal-black, grinning nigger was perched. One end of the bar stuck out a foot beyond the cage, at the side, and on it was hung a

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black Derby hat. For five cents you could take six shots at the hat, with tennis balls. If you hit the hat, the bar collapsed over the middle of the tank and dropped the darky in. After each ducking he would reappear, cheerful and dripping, reset his perch, and climb back on it, to await another onslaught. Davy said the inspiration of it must have been what he calls 'the Goat Brothers.' "

Sam's errand with the Chief was soon despatched and it was Prichard's turn. He found Emstead in a veritable sea of newspaper exchanges and heaped-up correspondence.

"Well, Prichard," Emstead greeted him, "how're you getting on?"

"I don't know how I'm getting 'on,'" Prichard answered, "but I'm getting 'in' all right enough."

He laid his disclosures before Emstead.

"How do you know it?" Emstead demanded in his quick searching way.

"Well, first of all, a man to whom I happened to talk about my undertaking told me he had heard it hinted. Then, among the mass of clippings and correspondence Davy let me look over, I occasionally found a word of comment written in a feminine hand—as if some one had read these things for Lyman Innes and passed them on to him. The man who started me on this hunt said it was whispered at the time of Innes's death that

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there had been a Delilah game—that Bardeen’s wife had been used by Bardeen’s employers to get grounds for impeachment. The feminine annotations promised to lead to something. Naturally, I tried to find the man who had been Governor Innes’s private secretary—Clarence Perkins was his name.”

“You found him?”

“Oh, easily. But he wouldn’t talk. I told him what I had heard and asked him if he was willing to say that there was absolutely no truth in it. He said he was perfectly willing to say this—that nothing could be more absurd.

“I said: ‘Do you deny that there was a woman who read letters and newspapers for the Governor and marked them for him?’

“He said: ‘I do.’

“‘Then how,’ I asked him, ‘do you explain these?’ and I showed him some that I had with me.

“‘There was a woman employed by me to do that work—during the pressure of correspondence entailed by the strike,’ he answered. ‘She was my employee—I hired her—to help me.’

“‘Do you deny that this woman was the wife of Bardeen, the assassin?’ I persisted.

“‘I—I do not deny it,’ he faltered. ‘It was a coincidence; that was all. I hired her without the Governor’s seeing her. I gave her the work

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to do. The very next day she came back and resigned—saying her husband objected to her doing any work for Governor Innes. She had not seen the Governor, nor had he seen her.’

“‘And you say,’ I went on, ‘that she worked for you only one day?’

“‘I gave her the letters one morning,’ he replied, ‘and she brought them back the next, and resigned.’

“‘That was when?’ I asked.

“‘That was in July, I think,’ he said, ‘early in July.’

“‘Yet there are annotations in the same hand,’ I reminded him, ‘on letters and papers dated as late as the end of August.’

“‘He flushed. He could see that he was caught. ‘I succeeded in getting her to reconsider,’ he admitted, ‘and she did some work for me under promise of secrecy.’

“‘And the Governor didn’t know about it?’ I went on.

“‘I probably told him—but he was much pre-occupied that summer,’ Perkins said.

“‘What became of this Mrs. Bardeen?’ I inquired.

“‘I haven’t the remotest idea,’ he answered.

“‘He said he had heard that she went to South America. I inquired around the Capital, but nobody knew. She had a brother living there at

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the time, but he has since moved away and I couldn't get trace of him. She was never seen after the murder. She and her little girl—nine years old—got away under complete cover—spirited away by State officials, I suppose. It was pretty slick business—the way the whole thing was handled.”

“But you haven't any proof,” Emstead declared. “You can't print suspicions and allegations—not in *Emstead's Magazine*, at least. Better drop all that.”

“And go on perpetuating the lie that Innes died a martyr?”

“You don't know that it is a lie.”

“But I have strong reason to suppose that it is.”

“It may be true,” Emstead answered, “and yet not be THE truth.”

“Do you want me to ignore it?”

“I do.”

“I thought you wanted me to uncover the truth.”

“I do. But I expect you to exercise some judgment about it. Lyman Innes put up a big, strong fight. You have every evidence to prove that—none to disprove it. Suppose it actually happened that his death was not martyrdom but retribution: what good are you going to do to any one alive by disclosing the fact? What harm may

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you not do—not only to the memory of the dead and to the feelings of the living, but to the faith of thousands who need faith in a fellow-man more than they need any other one thing.”

“Is this a hierarchy?” sneered Prichard—“or a republic? Are we priests, presuming to decide what it is expedient for people to know? Or are we men who believe in other men and in their right to know what we know?”

“This is a free country,” Emstead replied, “and there is at least *this* liberty of the press: if you look long enough you can almost always find some editor who will print anything you want to say. But you can’t print vague allegations against any man in *Emstead’s Magazine*—if I know it. Now, I don’t mind telling you that I had heard all these rumors long ago. I knew what I thought about them. I knew that the time was getting ripe for a big series of articles on the history of labor agitation in this country. I knew that one of the first things an investigator would be likely to fall foul of would be this Innes story. That’s why I offered the job to Dave Innes first. I knew he had the qualifications to write it—I knew his name would give it weight. I did not know whether he had ever heard anything alleged against his father or not. But I thought that it would be better for him to discover whatever allegation there was and keep it to himself, than for some one else to

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discover it and blat it out. When he wouldn't undertake the series I was pretty sure it was because he had heard something of this yarn. So then I gave it to you, because I thought you had some reason to be loyal to the Innes name.”

“I see,” muttered Prichard; “you gave the job to me, not because you thought I would be a fearless investigator, but because you thought my notions of suppression would coincide with yours. I flattered myself— Oh, well! I was wrong, I see.”

“Yes,” humored Emstead, “you were wrong. Now, get to work, sonny, and ferret out any crookedness that publicity may be good for—to keep history from repeating itself. But keep your work constructive. Any fool can destroy.”

“Then history isn't the statement of facts?” urged Prichard, rising to go.

Emstead laughed, as at a schoolboy's question.

“Not at all!” he declared. “Not at all. History is the shrewd interpretation of many men's testimony—many men, each of whom may or may not believe his testimony to embody the facts. An investigator is not necessarily an historian—he may be a mere collator of evidence. It is the ability to *sift* evidence, and to read into the residue out of a rich understanding, that makes a historian. Go to, my boy, and think about it!”

CHAPTER XXIII

A WEDDING

PRICHARD went direct from Emstead's office down to see Davy. It was almost noon, and there was an excellent chance that Davy would soon be coming up to The Players to lunch. But Dudley didn't want to meet Davy at the club. He had, on Davy's account, been avoiding the club these ten days past. He had not seen Davy since they parted so unceremoniously at Fourteenth Street and Irving Place; and he did not want their next meeting to occur in the presence of others.

It was just twelve when he reached the City Hall, and as he was crossing in front of it he saw Johnny Innes handing a girl into a taxi. The girl was Emily Bristow.

"I wonder what they're doing here," Dudley mused, looking after the cab as it rolled away. "By Jove! I believe they were getting a marriage license."

He went in to see. His investigations brought him down here frequently, and he had acquaintances in every office. It was true—Johnny and

A Wedding

Emily had taken out a license to wed. What was more, they had just been married in the Mayor's office.

Evidently none of their kindred was in their confidence. Dudley wondered what it all meant.

He crossed the square to the tall building where Davy's paper had its offices.

Mr. Innes was not in, the boy said. He had gone out half an hour ago with Mr. Rodman and another gentleman.

Dudley asked if he might leave a note for Mr. Innes, and was directed to Davy's little cubby-hole to write it.

On top of Davy's desk was an envelope addressed to him in a handwriting that made Dudley's senses reel. In all his life he had never wanted to do anything so much as he wanted to break that seal and learn who wrote that letter. Fearful to trust himself, he had to flee without taking time to write any note to Davy.

Dudley breathed freely when he found himself outside. Talk about temptation! He had never known before what it really meant.

He recrossed City Hall Park, threading his way through the noon-time crowds. Venders of "hot dog" were doing a thriving business from their push-carts; fruit was melting from the laden stands; purveyors of dust-swept sweets—chocolates and gum-drops—were making a multitude of

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penny sales. To and fro across the park hungry folk of more prosperous grades were hurrying on luncheon bent. Staring white bulletins of recent events were out in front of all the newspaper offices. Shrill street cries pierced the air above the roar of Broadway traffic.

Prichard noted these familiar things not at all. He got on a north-bound Broadway car and rode to Fourth Street. By that time his abstraction seemed to have dissolved sufficiently to permit him a controlling purpose. He walked west rapidly till he reached the Inneses' apartment-house. And he concealed from Nora the trepidation with which he asked for Miss Rose.

Rose was about to sit down to her solitary luncheon. She heard his voice at the door, and went hurriedly into the living-room to receive him.

"It's Mr. Prichard," announced Nora, ushering him in.

She retired by way of the dining-room, carrying thence with her the little casserole of hot stew she had just served for Miss Rose's luncheon.

Rose and Dudley confronted each other in deep embarrassment.

"Am I unwelcome?" he asked humbly.

Rose shook her head—not in eager denial but as if in doubt.

"Would you rather I went away—without trying to explain?"

A Wedding

There he touched her in a sensitive place—the love of justice.

“No,” she answered, but speaking with difficulty. “No—of course not! Won’t you sit down?”

Dudley winced at the formality of the invitation, but he accepted it. Rose faced him, her hands tight-locked in her lap—waiting. She was not going to make it easy for him; he had miscalculated her tender yieldingness.

“Rose,” he began, “I—that was all a mistake—all that occurred on my last visit. I see it now. I have reconsidered. I ask you to forgive me—and to forget.”

She stared at him wonderingly. “I don’t think I—understand,” she said.

He got up and went over to her, and bending down laid an arm across the back of her chair.

“I can’t talk to you like this,” he pleaded. “Don’t sit in front of me and listen like a judge. Sit beside me, dear, and listen like—like the angel you are! Rose—please!”

She went over to the davenport, and he came and sat beside her and held her hand while he talked.

“I was mad—to do what I did,” he went on. “Can’t you forget it, Rose—dear? I don’t know how I could have thought of doing such a thing. When I realized what it meant—how you were hurt by it—I gave it up.”

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"Gave up the series?"

"No—gave up writing anything different than has always been written about—that one episode. I have just had a talk with Emstead. He knew about that—that other version—but he was willing to have me ignore it."

"Did he know why you wish to ignore it?"

"You mean——?"

"Did he know that you are anxious to ignore it for our sakes—for my sake?"

"I think he knows that I am in love with you—he intimated as much."

"Did he—was he much disappointed in you?"

"For being in love with you?"

She ignored the raillery. "No, for being willing to—manipulate the facts, I suppose you'd call it."

"Not at all—or, that is to say, not after I had talked with him about it."

"He doesn't think it is going to hurt your reputation to—to write about it in the usual way?"

"No."

"I'm glad," she said, looking steadily ahead of her, an inscrutable expression in her face, "that things have worked out so satisfactorily for you—without any sacrifice on your part."

Dudley was not at all sure what she meant. He thought for a moment before he replied. It couldn't be a sarcasm, of course; Rose was never sarcastic.

A Wedding

"Yes," he declared; "it all came out right. And I'm glad, too—so glad!"

She got up and walked to the window and stood looking out. An organ-grinder with a monkey was playing in the square.

He looked after her; but somehow he dared not follow. What was the matter with Rose? She wasn't like herself at all!

"I've seen people," he remarked, "act gladder than you do."

She did not reply.

"Are you going to hold it over me?" he went on.

"Hold what over you?"

"That I was temporarily in error about—what I ought to do."

She faced him, her eyes flashing.

"You know how little likely I am to do anything of the sort," she reminded him.

"Then what is it, Rose? You haven't forgiven me for something. What is it?"

She turned away from him again and continued her gazing into the square.

He came and stood beside her, and would have drawn her to him, but she denied him by the least little gesture.

He dropped into a chair that stood near the window, and buried his face in his hands.

Rose maintained her distance for a moment;

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then she laid a hand on his bowed shoulder and murmured: "Dudley—don't!"

He gave no sign that he had heard.

Then, to his intense surprise, she withdrew her hand and walked away.

He had to lift his face to see where she had gone. "Is this the end?" he whispered hoarsely.

"The end of what?"

"Of our relations, of your love for me."

She gathered all her courage.

"Dudley," she began, standing over him and holding him with her two hands on his shoulders so he must look at her and could not drop his head again, "I hoped I shouldn't have to say this. But perhaps it was cowardly to try to make you infer it. I've had a shock—I have suffered. I don't blame you a bit for anything you have done—only—I don't feel the same toward you as I used to feel. I can't help this. I've tried to—and I can't. In a shock, I guess things come crashing down—sometimes—that no human power can set up again. It's like that. Perhaps you think it hasn't hurt me! But I tell you, I'd rather lose anything in all the world than lose—belief!"

"And you've lost belief in me?"

She nodded. Her eyes were brimming, and she lifted a hand from his shoulder to brush the tears away.

"Why, Rose? *Why?*"

A Wedding

"You don't understand?"

"No."

"That's it! It's because you can't understand—and I realize now that you can't, and probably never will. You don't know what love means, Dudley."

"I don't?" he cried. "That shows how little you know me! I tell you I've been pretty nearly crazed by this thing. I haven't slept. I've hardly eaten. I haven't been near the club. I couldn't face anybody——"

"I shouldn't think any series of articles that ever was conceived was worth all that!"

"Rose! Is it possible—from *you*? Do you think it was a matter of articles—of pay—of the little talk they create? It was principle, Rose! It was this: 'You have given yourself, Dudley Prichard, to the career of an investigator and recorder of facts—facts of public interest—those things which the public for its own good and guidance ought to know, and which have been kept from it by those who thrive on the public's ignorance. In the old days it was the priests—the hierarchy—who determined what the people ought to know; and precious little knowledge they allowed them! Nowadays it is an oligarchy of greed that controls truth, and feeds out to the people such sifted and altered bits of truth as are least likely to make them rise up and destroy the oligarchy's rule.'

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You have given yourself to oppose this—as Martin Luther opposed it and as Galileo opposed it, and as men in every age have opposed the suppression of truth. Your worth to your generation—to all succeeding generations—lies in your steadfastness to what you believe to be the truth. The disciples of evil like to believe that every man has his price, or, if not that, his limit, beyond which he will not go for any cause. It is not so! The world's progress—every painful step of it—has been forced by men who knew no limit to what they were willing to suffer for the right.' This was the way I argued, Rose! I told myself that if I could be deflected from what seemed to me to be the truth, by any consideration whatsoever—even you!—I should be a poor apostle. *That* was where the struggle lay!"

Rose looked bewildered. A few minutes ago she had understood Dudley to say that he had compromised, for her sake, with what he believed to be the truth. And now——!

"I don't understand!" she murmured.

"You don't understand a man's fight to be true to the thing he is pledged to do?"

"I don't understand how you have reconciled yourself to disregard the truth for me."

"I haven't. Don't you see? I couldn't do that—but by and by it came to me that I needn't—that I wasn't called upon to make this partic-

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ular disclosure—in fact, that it were better not made.”

“Oh!”

“I talked it over with Emstead, and he agreed that in this case the facts might not be the same as the truth; that it would be a pity to place the facts before persons who might mistake them for the truth; and so, in the interests of progress, it seemed wise not to disturb the prevailing faith.”

“You came, then, to feel that the prevailing faith is justified?”

“I did.”

Her eyes shone. “I am so glad!” she cried.

“It was like this: There was a woman. But, as nearly as I can make out, she was a Delilah whom the Philistines sent. The discredit should go rather to them who hatched the plot than to him who was its victim. They laid him low, you see—though not in exactly the way that is generally understood.”

“Was *that* it?” Rose’s cheeks were blazing.

“That was it. He was all alone—he was quite cruelly beset by his foes and even by his friends, who could not understand—everything was opportune—so they sent her to him to sympathize—and to destroy him.”

“Dudley!”

“So you see—at first I learned the facts; and then I learned the truth.”

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She held out both her hands to him.

"Forgive me!" she implored. Her relief about her father was so overwhelmingly great that it melted her to the utmost tenderness; it was so great that, compared with it, her relief to find Dudley justified was very secondary. But she was not measuring emotions and comparing them. She only knew that she felt as if a millstone had been lifted from about her neck, and that she wanted to be at peace with all the world. A Delilah? Sent to snare him in his loneliness and need! She looked up at his portrait and she thought it smiled at her as if to say: "Dear little girl! I'm so glad you understand. You have forgiven, always, I know. But now you realize that, while I was weak, I wasn't *low*."

Dudley held out his arms to her, and she dropped to her knees and hid her face against his breast.

"It has been a dreadful nightmare," she sobbed, "all of it! I am so glad it's over."

He stroked her head caressingly.

There was the sound of a key in the front door. Rose scrambled to her feet, and an instant later Davy came in, calling her.

"Rose!"

"I'm here," she answered.

He stood in the doorway and looked at Prichard. It was the first time either man had seen the other

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since Davy sprang into that taxi on Fourteenth Street.

Rose stepped quickly into the breach. "Davy!" she cried. "I am so glad you've come, dear. Dudley has just been telling me the most welcome news in all the world."

Still Davy did not look conciliated.

"He seems to have made you cry with his welcome news," was his defiant answer.

"I cried for joy. You must hear it, Davy—you'll want to cry, too."

"I think I know," Davy returned.

Prichard looked up questioningly.

Davy replied to him: "Emstead 'phoned Mr. Rodman—at the club, where we were lunching."

"'Phoned Rodman?"

"Yes. He knew Rodman was interested."

"Interested in what?"

"In your intended disclosures. Mr. Rodman went to Pittsburg to meet Emstead and came on with him this morning. Didn't Emstead tell you?"

"No."

"What reason did he give for refusing to print any disclosures about my father's death?"

"He didn't give any reason. I gave the reason!"

"Davy," Rose interposed, "we have misjudged Dudley. He has explained it all to me."

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"Well, I'll bet there are things he can't explain to me—or won't explain."

"I don't know," retorted Dudley, "that I feel called upon to try. I made everything clear to Rose—she understands—it is our own matter and we have settled it."

Davy looked at his sister.

"Is that true, Rose? Do you wish me to keep out?"

"Why, Davy! how you talk! Keep out of what? How could you keep out of my happiness, or why should I wish you to?"

"I don't know, dear," faltered Davy miserably. "If it's your happiness to try to love Prichard and you've found a way to do it, perhaps I oughtn't to interfere."

Prichard's gorge was rising. "I call on you to explain!" he cried. "What do you mean? You make insulting hints and insinuations. Explain yourself!"

Davy turned to Rose.

"Certainly," she declared. "I've known your love longer than I've known Dudley's, and had more proof of it. If you have any reason for believing I shouldn't trust him, I want to know what it is. And I want him to know what it is, so he can answer it."

"Well, it's this: Ever since the day Dudley declared his intention of publishing what he had dis-

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covered, a little group of our friends have been working quietly to see what could be done to circumvent him. Bruce got them together, and gave himself up completely to the work. Ansel Rodman helped him—and Creighton—and Mr. Penhallow. They have tried to discover what evidence there was in existence of my father's weakness. And I think they must have at least as good a case as Prichard's. As I told you, Mr. Rodman went to Pittsburg to meet Emstead, and laid the whole thing before him, and Emstead agreed that such disclosures would cloud the truth rather than clear it. He said he would take this stand when Prichard submitted his facts. Half an hour ago he called up the club and got Mr. Rodman on the wire. He said that Prichard had been there and that they had had it out."

Davy paused.

"I told Rose about the interview," Prichard declared, "and she was satisfied that I had acted from the best motives. Weren't you, dear?"

"Why—yes."

"Satisfied? Then you didn't tell her the truth! I know Rose——"

Prichard's eyes blazed with fury.

"Didn't tell her the truth? In other words, I lied! You take advantage of her presence to tell me that. I can't hit you. But I wonder if I am the only one who lies to Rose?"

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"What do you mean?"

"I mean that if she thinks she gets a square deal from you, I can tell her that she doesn't! I was able to tell her something about her father that was a great relief to her—that lifted the misunderstanding of many wretched years. Have *you* ever told her what you know about that woman who caused your father's death?"

"I know nothing about her."

"You do! I was in your office an hour ago, and there was a letter from her lying on your desk."

"How do you know it was from her?"

"Because I know her handwriting. I have samples of it in my pocket."

He pulled out a wallet and extracted from it several letters addressed to Governor Innes. On the margins were annotations in a feminine hand.

"Have you never seen the handwriting elsewhere?" Prichard sneered. It was an unusual hand—distinctive—not easy to forget.

Davy scrutinized it through his thick glasses.

"It's—it's like Mrs. Bristow's," he murmured wonderingly.

Prichard stared. Until that moment—so complete was his absorption in his own affairs—he had forgotten the episode of Johnny. Then, at mention of Mrs. Bristow's name, a flood of recollections suddenly co-ordinated.

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"Yes!" he shouted excitedly. "Mrs. Bristow! And your Johnny married her daughter Emily this morning in the Mayor's office."

He looked at Rose. She motioned him to go, and he went.

CHAPTER XXIV

TELLING THE TRUTH

WHEN Dudley was gone Rose lifted her head from the pillow, where she had buried it on telling him to go, and looked at Davy. She was frightened. Davy seemed like one stricken.

She went over to him and drew his head against her breast.

"Davy!" she whispered.

Davy made a mighty effort to collect his senses that had been scattered by the blow. He put his arm around her and leaned hard, as if for support.

"What shall we do?" he groaned.

Rose thought hard. "There's so much," she murmured. "One doesn't know where to begin. Somebody'll have to think for us, dear. We're both too dazed."

"Yes," he assented, "we're dazed."

"When you left the club, was Mr. Rodman still there?"

"Yes. I had lunch with him—and Bruce; and I left them there, to come and tell you."

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"See if you can't get them now."

He went to the telephone, which was in the hall. Rose sat with her hands clenched, trying to think: Mrs. Bristow—the Delilah—Johnny—Emily—the papers—Dudley—what would Dudley tell!

"They'll be here in ten minutes," said Davy, returning.

"Did you know anything about—Johnny?" she asked. "I mean—had you any idea it had gone this far?"

"None in the world."

"She"—Rose was racking her memory trying to piece things together and make an illuminating picture out of scattered bits—"she knew who we were—of course. She knew all the time. And she let us be good to her. She let you give her work to do. She came here—where his picture is—she brought her girl—to beguile our Johnny—she wasn't satisfied with luring our father to his death—she must set her snare for Johnny, too. And she's got him! Got him! Davy, this is the most hideous thing that ever happened."

"It's hellish!" Davy cried. "I didn't know there could be such fiendishness. I didn't know that human nature ever got so—so wicked, and so low. I've always thought that the things we call wickedness are weaknesses. I never thought there could be a soul so black—so devilish."

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"And she seemed so sweet and good!"

Davy lifted his arm and buried his face in the crook of his elbow.

"That's why I hate her so!" he sobbed. "She gave no warning. It was such an unfair game!"

He lifted his head and gazed up at the portrait of his father.

"No wonder she brought you to your death!" he murmured. "How could *you* know what her wiles were?"

Rodman and Norbury were there almost immediately—thanks to having caught a taxi without delay.

They also were so paralyzed when they had heard the news that for a few moments it seemed as if neither would they be able to think what must be done.

Bruce was the first to recover himself.

"What time was the marriage?" he asked.

"Prichard didn't say."

"Didn't he tell you how he found out about it?"

"No. He said he had been to my office—after we left—and he may have been to the City Hall about that time."

"We left there just before twelve."

"Yes."

"And he must have been there shortly after. Would news of the marriage get into the afternoon papers?"

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"Hardly. If it were a sensation—yes. But not ordinarily."

"Well, we want to stop publication of it. If word of a secret marriage gets out, somebody may set himself to discover why it was secret."

"I don't believe it will be considered much of a news item," Davy interposed.

"Not unless they fail to show up to-night at the theatre. If they do that, it's all off; nothing can stop the sensation. The whole thing will come out then!"

That was indisputable! They looked at one another aghast.

Johnny and Emily must be found before seven o'clock. Or, if they were not found, some arrangement must be made with the management to keep the thing quiet.

"I wonder," Rose faltered—"I suppose she knows where they are?"

"The mother?"

"Yes."

"You think she knew about it?"

Rose turned to Ansel Rodman. "You remember Friday evening?" she asked. "You recall how confused Mrs. Bristow was when we saw Johnny and Emily together? She had told me that Emily was dining with one of the girls in the company."

"It doesn't seem humanly possible," Rodman

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murmured, "that she—the mother—could have known—approved."

"Of course she knew! She could never be in any doubt as to who we were. And yet look how she——"

"That's so," he admitted. "I didn't suppose——"

"No one could be expected to suppose such a thing," Rose interrupted.

"Mr. Rodman," Bruce suggested, "will you go to the 'phone and see if you can get Mrs. Bristow? I suppose there's a 'phone in the house where she lives. She needn't know where you are. Be as casual as you can. See what you can find out."

But if any one had ever heard the name of the Bristows' landlady—which was improbable—no one could remember it. Bruce tried to get "Information" to tell him if there was a 'phone at that number. "Information Operator" was inclined to think it was against the rules for her to tell. There was a 'phone, but the name and number were not in the book and therefore could not be disclosed. Bruce appealed to the manager of the exchange, but without avail. He tried to get the manager to call the number and say that somebody wanted Mrs. Bristow to call— Oh, no! That wouldn't do! Mrs. Bristow would not be likely to call a number which she would doubtless recognize as the Inneses'.

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"I'll go up there," Rodman said. "We kept the taxi, thinking we might need it. I can get there in fifteen minutes."

When he was gone they tried to plan what they could do if he found no trace of Johnny through Mrs. Bristow.

"If he doesn't," declared Bruce, "we've got to get help on this, and get it at once. There's no guessing what those two—Johnny and the girl—have in mind. We don't know what Johnny knows, or what he has been made to believe. The fact that he hasn't announced his marriage to his family suggests that he knew reasons why he shouldn't. And that's why I am afraid they've run away."

"But why, then, did they get married here?" objected Rose. "Why not wait until they got to Providence or Hartford or wherever they were running to?"

Bruce beamed at her, approving her reasoning. "That's right!" he admitted. "Certainly! they must *not* have intended to run away."

"I don't believe he could have run very far," Davy interposed. "He asked me for a loan this morning, and I hadn't anything to give him. I loaned him fifty dollars last Saturday—and he didn't pay it back. He said he was 'broke.' But he may have made a 'touch' somewhere else."

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Rose went into Johnny's room and looked around.

"Nothing is gone—nothing that I can notice," she said when she returned. "Of course, he always has a few things at the theatre——"

"And Johnny," Davy added, smiling wanly, "never frets himself about small economies. He has been known to borrow money to go out of town for a week-end in summer, and to buy a new travelling bag and fit it out because it was a 'bother' to come home and get one ready."

"So the fact that he took nothing wouldn't prove that he meant to come home this afternoon and break the news to you—would it?" Bruce mused.

"Not at all."

"Well, if he's in town we must find him. He must know what the situation is and he must face it for the good of every one—not just for himself. I don't suppose anybody would presume to guess where he might have gone after his marriage? I mean, if he intends to tell about it, and only slipped off this way to get it over with before any one could object."

No; that would be hard to say.

"And we don't want to turn in a general alarm to have him hunted out. Wait, though! Couldn't McCurdy do it?"

"Do what?"

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"Pass the word to the police department that he wants Johnny located—quickly and *quietly*?"

"I don't know," Davy answered. "But he might be able to."

"Where does he lunch?"

"I don't know. Probably the Lawyers Club or at the Hardware—a good many of the city people go there."

"We'll get his office first. If he isn't there, maybe they'll know where he is."

Bruce got McCurdy's office. Lucius was there.

"Good God!" he answered when Bruce had made his request. "I've got the whole force out now looking for a girl—for Sonia Krakopfsky—who didn't come home last night. If I get after them again, to find another missing party of my acquaintance, they'll begin to think it's a *joke*!"

"This is something very unusual, Lucius," urged Bruce; they had been college mates, and he felt that he dared be urgent. "We may not have to call on you. But if we do, don't you care what the police force thinks—you just tell them you want Johnny Innes, and you want him before seven o'clock."

"Well, I'll do what I can, of course. And I'm glad you got me. I was just about to call up Rose and ask her to go to Catherine. But with this worry of her own, it is out of the question, of course."

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"I'll 'phone your office within an hour, if we need your help," Bruce told him. "Do you know where Creighton is?"

"Yes. He's helping me in this other case. He's going around with Catherine to some of the places where she thinks she may get trace of Sonia."

In an hour Ansel Rodman was back. He was greatly agitated when he came in.

"She knew nothing whatever about it," he declared, answering their looks of questioning. "She was paralyzed. I have told her everything."

They glanced, one at another, despairingly. Ansel Rodman's simplicity was beyond belief!

"I know what you think," he cried. "You think she has duped me, too. Well, maybe she has. I don't know. I never know! But I brought her along so you could see."

"Brought her?"

"Yes; she's sitting on the stairs outside. I said I'd come in first and break it to you."

"She sha'n't come in here again—ever!" cried Davy. "The serpent!"

But Rose intervened. "Wait!" she entreated. "There is nothing she can do to harm us any more. She has done her worst—has done it twice. We know her now for what she is. The only thing we need fear now is that this will get into the papers—the cheap, sensation-mongering

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papers—ten thousand times worse than any disclosure Dudley might have made in *Emstead's Magazine*. We're fighting that! We don't know what we have to fight in her. I say, let's bring her in—here—in front of father's picture—in his accusing presence, as it were—and measure her for the fight!"

They all stared, speechless, at little Rose. Her slender figure was updrawn to its fullest height. Her head was proudly erect. Her eyes flashed fire. She was like most gentle creatures when driven to bay for those they love, a fury.

Rodman opened the front door and asked Mrs. Bristow to come in.

Bruce thought he had never lived through such a tense moment.

Davy stood gripping the back of a chair. Rose, her small hands unmercifully clinched together against her palpitating breast, faced the door.

Then Ansel Rodman appeared, supporting a tottering figure larger than his own.

Olivia seemed scarcely to come in of her own volition. It was by no means evident that she knew where she was or how she had come. But one glance at her revealed, past all question, the all but unendurable agony she was suffering.

Bruce hastened to take her other arm and to lead her to the davenport.

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"Brandy, Davy!" he said.

And Davy complied.

She swallowed the cognac, and almost as soon as it was down her self-control seemed to come surging back to her.

"The stairs," she murmured. "I thought I should never get up—my heart—the shock."

Bruce slipped into Davy's den, out of sight. He was a stranger to her, and the ordeal she had to face might be an infinitesimal bit less terrible if he were not present.

The strain of the situation was intense. It seemed to Bruce, listening, an eternity before any one relieved it by an utterance. Then it was Rodman's voice, gentle but vibrant with feeling, that broke the strain.

"Perhaps," he suggested, "you are not able—in a little while——"

"No," she said. Then there was a moment's pause. "No! There has been too much delay."

Her tone was a confession of fault—without plea for mercy. She sat forward, facing her young judges. Ansel Rodman was beside her; him she could not see.

"I ask for no forgiveness," she began. "If there could be a penalty of law for my sin, I should welcome it. But there isn't. I am not granted the relief of making any expiation—except in suffering. Reparation no one can ever make for

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sin. I want you to know this though—the fault was all mine. He did no wrong!”

She looked up at the portrait, and seemed to gather strength from so looking.

“He was guilty,” she went on, “of the same fault I was—the same weakness—but he expiated. It was given to him to expiate. I went on in the same weakness—it was concealment. That was all we did that was wrong. We loved. We couldn’t help that. But we harmed no one—or, not as you think we did. We have harmed every one we loved—in ways we could not have dreamed. What we did to conceal our relations was done on my account—not on his. He had nothing to fear. I had. Mr. Rodman has told me what you have heard—about me. It is false—absolutely. I was not sent to him! I went—and went clandestinely because my husband disapproved. Let me tell you the story exactly as I know it.”

They signed to her to go on; and she began—began, not with any account of herself, pleading the extenuation for what followed, but with the simple statement:

“Mr. Bardeen was out of work on account of the strike. We were in straits. I heard that the Governor needed some one to read letters and newspapers for him. I applied for the work.” And so on, as briefly as she could. But indeed it was a brief story. “Until an hour ago,” she told

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them, "I did not know what it was that Mr. Bardeen had heard that—that dreadful night, nor where he had heard it."

She spoke shudderingly of the murder. "In a way," she said, "there was really nothing I could do but go on concealing what I knew—what I knew to be without sin, but what I could not expect the world to believe was pure. My great wickedness was not then—I had no choice then, after he was dead, but to keep silent—but now—in not fleeing this place when I learned that you were here—in compromising, ever so little, with Emily when I knew that she loved your brother. I deserve no quarter for such wicked weakness. I ask none. The question is, what can we do now? I do not want to fail in *this* crisis. In every other crisis I have failed. It will surely be granted to me that I may do something. And I mean to do it. I *must* do it, whatever it is!"

She told them of her talk with Emily on Saturday. "She promised me that there should be no engagement—for a while. Then, yesterday, I learned that she had a diamond ring. . . . We had a distressful night. This morning she went out about half-past ten. She did not tell me where she was going. I was sitting there, trying to gather courage to come down here and tell you the whole story—when Mr. Rodman came."

Bruce came out from the den.

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"We've got to find them before seven o'clock!" he declared. "After we've found them, there'll be time to talk over what can be done. If we can't get them, somebody has got to be thought of who can put pressure on the theatre management to keep their delinquency dark for a day or two—give out some story to the company (though any pressure that could make the company believe it is not easy to conceive!). And in either case, Davy, something has got to be done about the newspapers—and done in short order."

Olivia covered her face with her hands. What an endless chain of suppression was entailed by those few stolen hours, long ago! Would there never be an end to their penalty?

It was not necessary to find Johnny and Emily. They discovered themselves before any steps could be taken to discover them.

After lunching quite gayly at Martin's, they had got into a taxi and gone up to break the news to Mrs. Bristow. Failing to find her, they came down to Johnny's house to see if they could find Rose.

They were in irrepressible good spirits, feeling that they had burned their bridges behind them.

It was Ansel Rodman—in whom was that dual sense of sympathy and detachment which is the foundation of the novelist's genius—who realized

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the "values" in the entrance upon this tragic situation of these two children who had been nurtured in irresponsibility by the too tender unselfishness of the three acutely suffering persons they now confronted.

They had got married, Johnny explained, because Emily told him her mother's objections—all of them. Yes, he realized that they were rather grave; but he didn't believe any "inherited feud" ought to break young hearts that were innocent of wrong. (Johnny had often been told he would "make a fine Romeo." He doubtless felt like one now.)

He refused to give Emily up. He refused to keep his marriage secret, even for a while.

"After all," thought Ansel Rodman, "perhaps his is the better wisdom! But if it be so, how strangely are things ordered in this world!"

CHAPTER XXV

“FED TO THE WOLVES”

THE search for Sonia was not soon ended. Lucius bent every energy to it for several days, and then, on a never-to-be-forgotten evening, he tried to break it to Catherine that further search was hopeless.

Wing had a prolonged surcease from dinner-getting. When Lucius was not imperatively engaged, he dined with Catherine and discussed the progress of the hunt.

After the first day, she went back to her work. Her determination on this point was such that Lucius forbore to argue with her. And, after all, this was one of the things about her that most compelled his admiration. Her work was not an important work; it was not even interesting to her; but it was her work—it was to be done—and she had none of that weak and wobbly fibre so many women of the softer sort had, which made her regard work as something to be done when private griefs or private distractions allowed. She was a proper-spirited mate for a man with work in the world to do—was Catherine! Lucius had seen

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more marriages shipwreck because of women's inability to conceive the obligations of work undertaken by their husbands than for any other one reason. They were on wrong foundations—those marriages where one was all for work and one was all for play! He wanted to share his comforts with Catherine; he welcomed the right to fight for her where she could not fight for herself. But he thanked God that he had a better ideal of love than to wish to take Catherine and make her into something like an inmate of a seraglio—a wife, but an Oriental wife; a captive bird in a cage of guilt.

His interest in finding Sonia was, of course, exclusively on Catherine's account. He had never seen Sonia, and his secret opinion of her was that she was probably best left alone. The chances were that she wanted to be where she was, and that if rescued she would go more or less promptly back.

At any rate, he tried to believe that she would. And he tried to suggest as much to Catherine.

Catherine turned on him, blazing with fury. "You believe that?" she demanded. "You?"

"I don't say that I believe it," he retorted. "I say it *may* be so."

"And suppose it is—now! It isn't going to last—you know! There's a hideous awakening."

"But you can't force that awakening."

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“No, I can’t force it. But at least I can find her—my poor, pretty little lamb that’s led away—and tell her that when she escapes the wolves—if she ever does—I shall be waiting for her, with my arms wide open and my heart—ah, God!”

“Would you rest content—or at least make yourself acquiescent—if you could get such a message to her?”

“If I could *take* such a message to her; if I could see her and entreat her—as I entreated Aggie; if then she refused me, I could do nothing for her—for a while. But I’d try harder in behalf of other girls—other little sisters of the poor!”

“It might be,” he ventured, “that a message could be got to her——”

“Lucius!” The terrible accusation in her voice almost made his heart stand still. “Lucius! you know where she is!”

They were in the street, on their way to dinner. Her hand gripped his forearm with an intensity that seemed like to crush it.

“I do not know where she is,” he denied. “But I—I think I know how I could get a message to her.”

Catherine’s clutch relaxed; he thought she was going to fall. But he misread her. She backed away from him, quivering with rage.

“Listen, Catherine,” he entreated. “Don’t jump at conclusions. Be just. I’ve done every-

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thing on earth I can. I don't know where she is. But I have a trace of her—only a trace, mind you—not a clew to her whereabouts. I tell you, she's gone. There's nothing to do but to resign yourself. But I'll do my utmost to get your message to her."

"How can you get it to her?"

"I don't know. I don't even know that I can. I can try."

"How?"

"I tell you, I don't know. But if a way opens, I will follow it."

He took a step toward her, but she backed away from him defiantly.

"I understand!" she said, her voice breaking into a sob. "*It was* too wonderful to be true!"

And turning from him, she ran back toward Third Avenue.

Lucius followed her for a few paces, imploring her to listen to him. Then, fearful of making a scene in the street, he gave up pursuit.

When Catherine got back to her so-lonely little room, she threw herself on the dingy bed and wept tumultuously. "Oh, fool!" she cried in her heart. "Fool! fool! to think it could be true. What could he want of you but to amuse himself, and then to mock you?"

She got up, after a while, and took down a dress

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of Sonia's that was hanging on a wall-peg, and hugging it to her bosom, she lay down again.

And she had believed him when he said he had a tender zeal for girls—for the little laughter-loving daughters of the crowded tenements! She had believed him when he told her he was trying to have Sonia found! “If some one has led Sonia away, deceiving her with lying words of love, how can I blame her because she believed? *I* who believed *him!*”

It was Mollie who heard her sobbing. She opened the door and crept in. The sounds and signs of grief were familiar to Mollie.

Catherine raised her head to see who had entered. She did not speak when she saw it was Mollie, but buried her head again in the pillows. Mollie cuddled in beside her and waited. Wise little Mollie! She knew that comfort must not obtrude—that it must bide its time—must be loving enough to wait.

By and by Catherine stretched out an arm and drew Mollie close—oh, very close!

The Crehores knew, of course, that Sonia was gone. They knew, too, that a friend of Catherine's—on whose friendship they put their own interpretation—was helping in the search for her. Crehore was a humble politician, but he was part of a close-knit organization; he knew something of its methods, and even to his obscure place in it

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a certain amount of "inside information" percolated. He knew, as he said, "all about" Lucius McCurdy; he thought he knew about what kind of interest Mr. McCurdy could take in Catherine—and even at that, there was no accounting for tastes.

After an hour or so of silent comforting, Mollie grew alarmed because there was no abatement of Catherine's grief. Mollie could feel the rigidity of Catherine's body; the unrelaxing strain with which she held the child to her.

"Cath'rine," she whispered, in a frightened tone, "what is it? Is Sonia dead?"

Catherine released Mollie and sat up in bed, pressing one hand against her forehead as if to quiet an intolerable throbbing.

"No," she answered; "no! Sonia is not dead—not dead—poor little Sonia!"

"What makes her 'poor,' Cath'rine?"

Catherine gripped the child's shoulders and shook her fiercely.

"Because the wolves have got her!" she moaned. "The wolves—his friends——"

Mollie was terrified. She ran into her own house. Her father was just going out.

"Something's the matter with Cath'rine!" she sobbed. "She acks terrible, an' says the wolves has eat up Sonia."

Crehore looked at his wife significantly. Then he stepped to Catherine's door and knocked.

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Catherine opened the door a few inches and peered out.

“It’s me,” he announced. “Did yer frien’ tell ye?”

“Tell me what?”

“About Sonia. That he knows where she is.”

“He told me he didn’t know.”

Crehore laughed harshly. “He’s a four-flusher, all right. He hates to admit there’s anythin’ he can’t do.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean this: lemme pass ye the tip, Cath’rine; ye’ll not git Sonia back, an’ ye may as well stop lookin’.”

“How do you know?”

“Because I know who’s got ’er. It’s a man higher up than yer frien’, an’ he darsent say a word.”

Catherine was on her feet confronting him as he stood in the half-open door.

“Does Mr. McCurdy know that?”

“Sure he knows it!”

“And how do you know it?”

Crehore’s manner changed. From having been free and self-important, it began to show signs of hedging.

“Things git around,” he said. “I thought I’d tip ye off, so ye wouldn’ waste no more hopes on it.”

Catherine’s first impulse was to blaze out at

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him—as one of a vile gang. But she bethought herself that a little restraint, a little craft, might serve her much better.

“Do you know where she is?” she asked him persuasively.

“No.”

“Do you know who has her?”

“How’d I know? I on’y heard it whispered aroun’ that it was a man high up—wid a pull so strong no one kin pull agin ’im.”

“How did she come to meet such a man?”

Crehore looked at her. He had thought Catherine knew more about such things.

“I don’ suppose she ever heard of ’im,” he laughed.

“You mean that some one—some one got her—for him?”

“Sure!”

Catherine clutched at the door for support.

“So that—was—it!” she gasped. “The wolves! And *he* knew!”

Crehore had compassion, according to his kind, for the agony he read in her face.

“Don’ take it so hard!” he consoled. “Sonia’s prob’ly got it swell where she is.”

Again Catherine restrained her ruling impulse and resorted to guileful entreaty.

“Maybe she has,” she assented. “Poor little Sonia! I wish I knew. I wouldn’t ask anything more if I could just know that she was satisfied.

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Don't you suppose I could see her, if I promised not to ask her to come away?"

Crehore shifted about uneasily. "Why," he answered, "she could surely send ye word if she wanted t' see ye. Ye don' believe in this 'white slave' foolishness, do ye?"

"Believe in it?" cried Catherine, throwing prudence to the winds; "of course I believe in it! Even if she's not in slavery behind locks and bars, she's in slavery to the idea that because she's been trapped there's nothing for her but to stay trapped. That's slavery enough! I want to tell her that it doesn't matter what she has done; I want her back and I'll love her better than I ever knew how to love her before!"

Crehore shrugged. "I don' make out that Sonia's very strong for sisterly affection," he declared. "I'll bet she'd rather have what she's got now than all ye could ever give 'er to yer dying day."

Lucius went home when he saw that he could not make Catherine hear him. He got on a Third Avenue car and went back to his rooms. There, at least, he could be alone with his thoughts. He dared not be otherwise; for he felt that if any one were to speak to him, he was likely to become guilty of homicide.

He let himself in and went up to the sitting-

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room. Wing had left a cheery fire banked high in the hard-coal grate. Lucius turned on no light—partly because he wanted the consolation of the dark, and partly because he did not want callers.

He dropped into his Morris chair before the fire and sat staring.

An hour ago, when he came home, he had found Crehore waiting for him.

Crehore introduced himself. Lucius recognized the name as that of Catherine's landlord, and instantly he was a prey to sick fear; something had befallen Catherine!

"Did—did Miss Krakopfsky send you?" he faltered.

Crehore laughed. "No," he answered.

Lucius felt in the man's manner that which was sinister.

"Well?" he demanded sharply. His tone was that of command, but his feeling was one of anxiety to have the worst quickly over.

Crehore did not cringe. He knew the ground on which he stood.

"Ye're lookin' fer the girl Sonia," he began.

Lucius nodded brusquely.

"Ye'd better keep off," Crehore advised, leering.

"What do you mean?"

"I'm here to tell ye it'll be damn onwholesome fer ye t' go any fuder wid this."

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“You—you—” Lucius could not frame his accusing question.

“Steady!” cautioned Crehore. “There’s power bigger’n yours, my frien’, takin’ care o’ me on this job.”

“Then it’s your job, is it?”

“It’s my job, all right—though Sonia don’ know it, even.”

“You mean that you’ve trapped her—got some one to trap her for you—and handed her over—to curry favor for yourself with some brute in power?”

“Steady! It wouldn’ be good fer yer future if he knew ye’d called ’im a brute.”

“Who is he?”

“I wasn’t to mention no names. On’y, if ye didn’ believe me, I was t’ tell ye t’ take notice how busy th’ p’lice could git—an’ do nothin’!”

When he was gone, Lucius did some hard thinking for a few minutes, during which the reason for the futile efforts of three days became unmistakably plain to him. Then he pulled himself together with a mighty effort and went to meet Catherine.

In the dark sitting-room by the fire he was reviewing many things. This was “Practical Politics” indeed!

He must have been there a matter of two hours, now pacing up and down like a caged beast in

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sullen rage because he could not destroy his bars, and now returning to his Morris chair to sit for a while with his shoulders bowed, his head buried in his hands—when he heard his door-bell ring.

He did not answer, but he stepped to the window to look down. By the light of the street lamp he could see who his caller was when he went away.

There were three rings. Then he heard the importunate one going away. It was Catherine!

He raised the window and called to her to come back, and in a minute he was downstairs and at the open door.

“My dear!” he cried. “I *am* so glad you’ve come!”

He held out both hands to her in welcome, and would have drawn her in, but she declined to come.

“I’ll say my say here!” she declared, her voice shaking with passion.

“Not on the doorstep!” he pleaded.

“Yes, on the doorstep! Do you suppose I’d go across your threshold—you—you vile ensnarer?”

“Catherine!”

“Don’t insult me further! I’ve stood enough from you. I have no hope that you’ll tell me where she is—my little lamb that you’ve fed to your wolves—I’ll not waste breath by asking you—I’ll save it to denounce you with—you and all your rotten kind who live on the shame of girls. And

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how you lied to me about protecting them—YOU! Why, the deliberate destruction of them is part of your system of spoils! I know! He’s got her now—that beast whose lair you dare not invade! And what will he do with her, presently? He’ll turn her loose to become a thing that can be levied on for blackmail, to gorge him and you with luxury. Those girls that walk the streets are part of the Practical Politics you champion. You trade in their shame for revenue. I’ll cry your vile traffic from every house-top—until you set your wolves on me to silence me. And I left Russia so I could keep Sonia’s honor safe!”

Lucius reached forward suddenly and caught her. She *must* listen to him! She *should* not think such things of him!

But she wrenched herself free and was gone, stumbling in tear-blindness toward the garish lights of the Bowery and of Chinatown.

CHAPTER XXVI

“PRACTICAL POLITICS”

“IT remains to be seen what Prichard may do,” said Creighton, to whom Norbury had related the developments of that eventful Thursday.

Bruce’s face darkened. “I wish it remained to be seen what some of us could do to him,” he muttered. “But there’s nothing we can do without stirring up the very comment we want to avoid. I don’t think he’ll do much, though. The fangs of the situation are drawn, now that Mrs. Bardeen has been found. He has no evidence. And there’s a pretty good case against him if he intimates anything; because her word ought to be at least as good at his, and the fact that one of the Inneses has married her daughter is proof pretty positive—or they can make it seem so—that the children hold her blameless.”

“Do they?”

“I think they do. They had good reason, there for awhile on Thursday before she came, to feel terribly bitter against her. But I think she has won them.”

“Do you believe her?”

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“Yes; I do. So does Rodman. She told him about herself quite freely, it seems, and he was thoroughly impressed. And Rose and Davy are so essentially *just* that they were not hard to plead to. In any case, though, they couldn’t help seeing that all the common sense of the case lay in trying to believe her, in accepting Johnny’s marriage, and in letting things drift. Of course they’re not saying anything about Mrs. Bristow being the wife and Emily being the daughter of their father’s assassin. That’s unnecessary. But if it ever comes out, it’ll be less a bogey than it would be if they were estranged from her.”

“Yes—naturally.”

“They’re not trying to strain things—Mrs. Bristow remains in the boarding-house alone. Johnny and Emily have got a couple of rooms in a moderate-priced hotel. Rose and Davy are to stay as they are; they won’t make any effort to avoid Mrs. Bristow. And—you know them! They’ll be trying to find a way for her to be happy, and to boost her into it, before a fortnight’s passed.”

Creighton nodded. “They’re dear people,” he declared. “I never met dearer.”

“Nobody ever did,” said Bruce. “I’ll guarantee that if that house they’re living in stands up for fifty more years, there’ll be a tablet on it to tell the passers-by that ‘Here were encouraged more dreams to which the world is in debt, than in any

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other one place in Manhattan.' And Rose! I'll venture to say there isn't a woman in New York to-day who'll figure oftener in the intimate literature of fifty years hence than she will."

Again Creighton nodded acquiescence. "If ever," he suggested, "anything were to be said that seemed to—to assail her happiness, she would not lack able defenders."

"I should say not! There are too many persons in her debt. And it's the kind of debt that makes no enemies. You loan money to a man, and the chances are that you lose a friend. But give him belief—encouragement—when he most needs it, and, unless he's a dog, he doesn't forget."

The two men were breakfasting together—a late breakfast—in a quiet corner of The Players dining-room, and as their talk ran on, it touched upon the number of persons who had heard something of the whispered stories about the Innes shooting, and how still, notwithstanding, the matter had been kept.

"People are pretty decent—most of them," Bruce observed; "especially where their affectionate loyalty is appealed to. Take this club, for instance. I was too young to belong to it while Edwin Booth was alive; but I've heard the older men talk—as you have—about the lengths to which any of them would go to keep even the most round-about mention of John Wilkes or of Lincoln from

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being made. Everybody had to know about that tragedy, of course. But it was the constant effort of Edwin Booth's friends to make it appear that they had forgotten how Lincoln died.

“I remember,” he went on, “another instance of that feeling in people. The first time I was in Salem, Mass., I had not been long out of college. I was moderately interested in Salem witchcraft and immoderately interested in Hawthorne. I poked around—found the Union Street house where he was born, and the Manning house on Herbert Street where he lived so long, and the Peabody house on Charter Street where he courted Sophia. I went down to the Custom House. And then I had a fancy for trying to retrace his steps to Mall Street whither he had gone to tell Sophia he had lost his job—only to be met by her brave reply: ‘Good! Now you can write your novel!’—which novel was ‘The Scarlet Letter.’ I think it was in the Charter Street Burying Ground, where Judge Hathorne, who condemned the witches, lies, that I suddenly remembered it was in Salem that the famous White murder occurred. You remember?”

“Yes. Webster—and the ‘murder will out’ speech we used to read in school.”

“The same. There were two elderly ladies browsing about among the gravestones. One of them looked to be a Salemite, showing a friend the sights. I asked her if the White mansion was

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still standing. She had never heard of any such mansion. I must have asked a dozen persons. No one knew. I gathered from their manner that even Daniel Webster's name was strange to them. So I went into the Essex Institute—where there is a museum of Salem antiquities—and bought a guide book to Salem. It was a bulky book and it seemed to mention every personage who had ever ridden through Salem on a fast train. But no Webster! No one named White! I approached the young lady from whom I had bought the book and asked her if I *could* be mistaken about Salem being the place. She drew me aside and whispered to me, reproachfully, that in Salem no one ever mentions the White murder—out of respect to the eminent and universally beloved family, two of whose members were convicted of the crime. One of these two was hanged—if I remember rightly—and the other hanged himself in Salem jail. The mansion of the murdered Mr. White is next door to the Institute and, on my promise to be very discreet, she accompanied me out into the yard where I went to see the first Protestant Church in America, and showed me the window by which the murderer entered. I thought that was pretty fine of Salem! I thought this nice consideration lent the old town as rich a flavor as anything Hawthorne ever wrote about it."

"I agree with you."

"And once," Bruce continued, "some newspa-

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per man I know told me of another interesting case. He said that in a certain Virginia town there is just such a tradition of loyal silence. One of the Randolphs of Roanoke was charged with a pretty heinous crime. Whether his town-folk did or did not believe him innocent, they believed in and gloried in the Randolphs as a family. Patrick Henry defended him. This man told me that a hundred years or so after the affair, one of the sensational papers here in New York got wind of it and wanted to play it up for a Sunday feature. It was reported that an elderly lady who was a descendant of Patrick Henry was in possession of the documents detailing the case. The paper sent a representative to her. She was found to be in circumstances of great need, but she declined with scorn and indignation the offer of a large sum for her ‘evidence.’ It does a body good to hear of things like that.”

“Telephone call for you, Mr. Creighton,” announced an attendant of the club.

Creighton excused himself and went to the ‘phone. When he came back his face was full of trouble.

“It was McCurdy,” he said. “He’s in a bad way. He wanted me to come down town and see him. Something about the Krakopfskys.”

“He’s much interested there?”

“In Catherine—yes.”

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"If anything very happy eventuates there, it'll be another page in the golden records of Rose Innes."

"That's a fact—it will."

Creighton found Lucius in his office, trying to get through with his work but pitifully wretched.

It cost McCurdy's pride something to admit the truth to Creighton, but he went through with the ordeal unflinchingly.

Creighton forbore to suggest by word or look or tone: "I told you so." When Lucius was through he asked:

"How can I help you?"

"You can do this," Lucius suggested, "if you will; you can see Catherine. She will listen to you. She would not listen to me."

Creighton's eyes had an inscrutable expression. There was pain in it—intense pain—but there was something besides, something not easy to read.

"Yes," he agreed. "I'll see her—of course."

"And you'll make it plain to her that I knew nothing of it—absolutely nothing—until last night?"

"I'll tell her. But you know what her first question will be!"

"What?"

"It will be: 'What is he going to do about it?'"

Lucius groaned. "There's the rub," he faltered.

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“Still? In spite of all this?”

McCurdy got up and began to pace up and down his office excitedly.

“Why, Creighton!” he exclaimed. “You know as well as I do that this isn’t politics—it’s human nature. The beast has always existed. Every political economy since the Garden of Eden has depended upon him and contended against him—some contending more, some less. This particular individual beast belongs to the same political organization that I belong to. But if there is any political organization which has not its quota of beasts, and does not have to accept them, I’ve never heard of it. Vice and blackmail are part and parcel of the history of all power. A man must wade through their mire to get anywhere——”

“Then what am I to tell Catherine?”

“Tell her? Why, tell her I had no more to do with Sonia’s going than you had. And that I have no more power than you have to get her back.”

Again that inscrutable look in Ballard Creighton’s eyes.

“I’ll tell her,” he said.

He waited at the corner of Third Avenue and Twenty-fourth Street, around six o’clock, for Catherine to come by. He was afraid to go to

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the Crehores'—afraid he might meet Crehore—afraid of what he might do.

Catherine came up the avenue wearily and turned the corner with dragging steps. Creighton's heart ached for her almost intolerably.

She was pathetically glad to see him.

"Don't go back there," he entreated, nodding irefully toward the Crehores' house. "Come somewhere with me where we can talk—and eat. I— You look to me like a girl who hadn't eaten or slept in many hours. It won't do, you know! If we're going to find Sonia, we've got to have strength."

"But we're not going to find her. She's gone—fed to the wolves."

"We *are* going to find her!" he declared.

His tone rang with confidence that thrilled her and rekindled her hope.

"Are we?" she murmured tremulously. "How?"

"I must tell you other things before I tell you that," he answered; and then he told her about Lucius.

When he came to the part implicating Crehore, he thought she would crush the bones in his forearm, she clutched it so wildly. It was her vent: instead of screaming or sobbing or crying or fainting, just that clutch, like that of any creature who endures mortal agony in silence.

When she could speak she said: "I mustn't

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ever go back there! If I should kill him, the law would put me away; and who would help Sonia then? The law! It won't give me any justice, nor let me take vengeance for myself. It might fall to Lucius McCurdy to send me to the electric chair!”

She spoke with the bitterness of gall, as if she had no reason to suppose he would not prosecute her if his party interests demanded.

Creighton pleaded McCurdy's anguish of mind and, as he had expected, Catherine immediately demanded:

“What is he going to do?”

“He says there is nothing he can do.”

“And yet he thinks he suffers—thinks he loves!”

“He's bound. A bound man cannot love. I'm free, nothing holds me—no ties of any sort. I'll show him!”

Then he told her of his plan.

“We could ask some of our friends to take this matter to the papers,” he began; “to papers of the opposing party. But we don't know that they'd take it up—perhaps they're not eager for retaliation—and if we asked a magazine to tell our wrongs, they'd be months in getting into print. There's nothing for us but to tell them ourselves—you and I. I'm ready to tell Sonia's story from every curbstone in Manhattan—if you'll let me. I've nothing to enlist for your aid but an actor's

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voice, an actor's training in putting things 'across.' But if you'll give me permission, I'll appeal to every man whose ears I can reach, to go to Mulberry Street, or to City Hall, or wherever need be, and demand the return of Sonia. It wouldn't take all the voters in Manhattan to move the Powers that Be. What do you say?"

"Say?" she echoed. "I say when can we begin?"

"In about thirty minutes—if you'll eat enough to give you strength."

Catherine ate obediently all that he urged her to. The relief to her in the prospect of being able to do something—actually herself to do it—was tremendous. Creighton reflected as he watched her that the passivity to which most of us in these highly civilized days are consigned at times of great stress, is one of society's cruelties that ought somehow to be offset since it cannot be done away with. We have agreed to delegate to others the avenging of our wrongs, the recovery of our lost, the power to demand for us better laws. Society is better managed so. But individually we suffer. We sit by and wait for some one who ought to bear our interests in his heart but probably does not, and we suffer the agony of inaction and also the deprivation of all that might develop in us with the experience of standing personally up to a crucial situation and wrestling with it until

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we triumph or until we cannot wrestle any more. Catherine had been paying the penalty of civilization. To-night she was going to have done with waiting on a politically controlled police and do something of her own power to get Sonia back.

The first thing he did when they were through their dinner was to telephone Rose Innes and ask her if Catherine might come there for the night.

“I can’t explain much over the ’phone,” he said; “but it’s this: Mollie’s father was responsible for Sonia’s going away. You understand? And Catherine has just found it out. She mustn’t go back there.”

“Of course not!” Rose agreed readily. “Ask her to come right to us.”

“She— We are going somewhere first. It may be rather late when she gets to you. Will that matter?”

“Not a bit. We’re usually up pretty late anyway. And if you’re delayed beyond our usual bedtime, I’ll wait up for you till you come.”

“We’ll try not to keep you waiting. Thank you, and good-by.”

Then they started out—just they two against the great unheeding city—to try to get Sonia back.

Creighton had been busy throughout dinner thinking where he should go to launch his plea. He wanted to talk to men who had sweethearts

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and daughters. Fortunately the night was mild, and open-air audiences were not impossible.

"Let's try Tompkins Square," he suggested.

Catherine agreed.

There were more children in the square than adults, and, of the latter, more women than men. But Creighton was willing to begin with a small audience. Indeed, he was glad so to begin, for he was frightened. Like nearly all actors, he was miserably afraid of the thing impromptu. With all his heart he desired to be able to do that thing, but when it came to the test he was panic-stricken.

He stopped before a bench on either end of which sat an absorbed couple courting.

"I wonder," he began in a low voice, "if you two men would do something to help a young girl who is in very great distress? Not give anything, but *do* something! The same unhappiness may come at any time to the young lady with you. If it ever does, I'll be glad to do for her what I ask you to do now. We men don't have to fight to protect our women as much as men used to, but we're just as ready to do it when the need comes, I know."

The word "fight" was magic; evidently Creighton was not wrong when he said that "Jack the Giant Killer" is a universal story.

It doesn't take long to get an audience in Tompkins Square, and once Creighton got started, and

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found that he was being listened to with interest, he forgot himself and let his theme have sway.

He talked about the lack of opportunities for girls like Sonia. They could understand that, here. He told how pretty she was, and how young, and how, naturally, she was looking for romance. All the passionate desire that was in him to reach the hungry hearts of people with an enkindling idealism; all the special earnestness of appeal for girls that Catherine had taught him; these fired his message, which his actor's art enabled him to deliver with a simple charm that held his hearers spellbound.

As he saw the crowd gathering he kept raising his voice. But he never shouted. And it was of extraordinary encouragement to him to see persons on the outskirts straining to hear. He was adept in placing his voice. He managed so that every one who wanted to hear could hear. But he let the newcomers begin with making an effort. He knew the value of curiosity.

When the crowd was large enough and intent enough for his purpose, he made an end of all generalizing and told Sonia's story briefly but with a tragic power that was enormously compelling. He omitted reference of any sort to Lucius or to any influential friends of Catherine's who might have helped her. He let her stand forth simply as the daughter of the tenements she was, unaided

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in her fight to save her sister. He told of the inactivity of the police. They knew something about that, here in the neighborhood of Tompkins Square. Then he explained *why* the police dared not find Sonia.

"Perhaps just for this one girl's rescue, I might not dare to come to you," he said. "But I think I should dare—even for that. Men—real men—will fight for one girl's wrongs as hard as they'll fight the wrongs of many. This *is* for the wrongs of many, though! There isn't a day that somebody's daughter and somebody's sister and somebody's sweetheart isn't fed to the wolves.

"We haven't much power—alone—any of us. *I'm* only a man out of work. I'm nothing at Police Headquarters or at City Hall. But I have a vote—one little vote. Each of you men has a vote. All I could do to help get Sonia back was to say that I'd register my protest at Headquarters and that I'd get every other man I could to do the same. That's what I ask of you; just a word, to say that you're not supporting this traffic in girlhood. One protest doesn't count. Maybe a hundred protests won't count. But a thousand will—especially if each of us makes it plain that he is trying to get others—many others. Maybe you can't go to make complaint. A penny post-card will do just as well. There isn't a man here who will refuse to write a penny post-card to Police



As he saw the crowd gathering he kept raising his voice. But he
never shouted

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Headquarters, Mulberry Street, and say ‘Find Sonia.’ That’s all you *need* to say. I’ll make plain to them what that means. Just write ‘Find Sonia’ and sign your name and address.”

Catherine was tugging at his sleeve. “I want to speak,” she said.

“Sonia’s sister wants to plead with you,” he announced to the crowd.

He helped her to stand upon a bench. Every eye was strained to see her.

It was drama; not acted drama, but the real drama of life. And here was appeal to the beholders to take a part in it; not merely to sit passive and hear of brave deeds, but to become actors in a drama of chivalry. Memories of things read—of great mediæval scenes—thronged Creighton’s brain as he listened to Catherine; as he looked out upon the sea of faces lighted by the arc-lamps of the square.

Catherine had no thought of self. He was amazed at the eloquent power of her.

Her strong foreign accent; her poor clothes; her plain pale face illumined with her burning purpose; the toil-worn hands she held out in pleading; all these things helped her to move her audience profoundly.

“I come from Russia,” she said. “In Russia these things happen—the beast who has official power gets our little sisters—and we have no re-

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dress—we cannot appeal. Here in our new country they happen also—beasts are still beasts though they live here—but we can appeal. Justice is tied here as there. But not so strongly tied. Here, if one set of men will not give justice to the people, another set can be put to replace them. There, we must remove cruelty with a bomb. Here, you may do it with a vote. There, we must make tyrants afraid with dynamite. Here, you can do it with a penny card on which you write ‘Find Sonia.’ It is a country in which every man is free to be kind to other men. I ask you men to help me. To help me it is not necessary, as once it would have been to rescue a maiden whom the robber barons held, to take up arms; to leave your work and your dear ones; to risk your lives storming castles that bristled with archers or with guns. Maybe you will not do as I beg you to do, because it is so easy. Maybe you will turn away and go back to your homes where your own little sisters are—safe—and forget.”

“No! no!” they cried.

Her tears of gratefulness overflowed. She held out her hands to them with a gesture as of thanks she could not utter.

“We will go on our way then,” Creighton said, addressing the crowd briefly in farewell. “Perhaps some of you, too, will go on and repeat the story. Perhaps the first snowfall will come to-

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morrow—white cards, drifting in and piling up in heaps at Mulberry Street—white cards that say ‘Find Sonia.’”

They made way respectfully for Creighton and Catherine to pass, and not a few grasped Catherine’s hand and wrung it as she went by.

“There is a square further down town that I want to try,” Creighton said when they were beyond the dispersing crowd. “I don’t know the name of it, but it’s below Grand Street, a block or two, and I think further east than this is. I’ve crossed it going to the children’s theatre in the Educational Alliance Building.”

“I know,” she answered. “There are always many people about there—and many people to whom one can appeal.”

They were vastly encouraged by the reception with which their first effort had met. Ballard Creighton was quite carried away. Notwithstanding his sympathy for Catherine—and it was deep sympathy, for he loved her as he had never before loved woman—he was happy as he had not been happy in his whole life before. He saw, in a vision of promise, the beginning of his dream come true.

He began his second appeal with confidence. He pleaded with an eloquence that was far less conscious than inspired. Some men muttered. Many women wept.

“The hearts of men have always been tender in

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response to the cry of 'Child lost!'" he said. "Because they have always known that dangers lie in wait for innocence and helplessness. Most of the stories which have inspired the poets and the artists and the dramatists, have been stories of brave men going to the rescue of the distressed. Take, for instance, the story of the picture that is said to be the most truly priceless painting in the world, the canvas that is the glory of Holland. Most people call it 'The Night Watch.' But that isn't its name. Its name is 'The Sortie of Banning Cock's Company.' In those days, when Rembrandt painted it, Holland was harassed by the Spaniards. One of the things the Spaniards did—those fierce and cruel Spanish soldiers far away from their own womenkind—was to snatch the girls of Holland and bear them off to their own camps for prey. Banning Cock was captain of a militia or citizens' volunteer company which answered at any time a call of distress and went to the rescue. . . . I wonder if any of you lived, when you were younger, in a small town—just a few little houses, maybe, huddling together; and all around and about, the wide prairie or the deep forest. And on a night when you were a little boy and were sitting down to your good hot supper in the snug kitchen, where the lamplight shone on all the dear faces about the family table, did ever a white-faced man, with frightened, troubled

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eyes, come to the door and tell in a voice hoarse with anxiousness that his little girl hadn't come home? And did your father—your big, brave father—without waiting to eat a bite or to do a chore or anything; did he go out to the barn and light his lantern and join the search? And did your mother and you and the other children stand at the windows for hours and watch the many, many lanterns of the searchers shining and dimming in the forest or on the plain like fireflies on a summer evening? And did some one come to your house, as the night wore on, and summon your dear tender mother, with all her power to comfort and to sustain, to come to the frantic mother of the little girl who was lost? Did mother hug you tight—oh, very, very tight!—for a second when she kissed you and told you to be a good boy while she was gone? And after she had left you, did you children talk in terrified whispers of the bears and wolves—the Indians—the gypsies? Did you shiver with dread lest they get your dear brave father too? . . . Men, I am that neighbor who comes and says a little girl is lost. Is there a man here who won't help to find Sonia?”

When he spoke of the tied hands of the police, he mentioned no party names; referred to no individuals, but every one knew whom he meant. A municipal election that had racked the borough was just over.

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"We do things otherwise than as our fathers did," he said. "We no longer take our lanterns down and go out all night to look. We hire such things done for us. We elect men to see that they are done. Sometimes the results are about the same as if our fathers had stayed at home and supped comfortably and said, 'Let the wolves find her!' Nothing made of human flesh could have done that, you think. Can you, then, go to your homes and say, 'Let the wolves find Sonia'?"

As he and Catherine walked away to plead elsewhere, a missile thrown with unerring aim flew out of the dispersing crowd and struck Creighton in the back of the head, just about the base of the brain; it was a jagged piece of granite paving block and the gash it cut was horrible.

"Who threw it?" a hundred voices demanded. But if any knew he did not tell.

Some pensioner of the wolves had struck for them and they would give him cover and reward.

At ten o'clock Catherine telephoned from the hospital to Rose and Davy. They answered that they would come at once. When they got there, Davy was surprised not to find Lucius.

"Couldn't you get him?" he asked Catherine.

"I didn't try," she said.

Before she could object he was away to find a 'phone.

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Lucius came about eleven o'clock. In the sad necessity of explaining to him how Creighton had been laid low, it was several minutes before they—but not before he—noticed that Catherine had effaced herself.

When Davy went for her she came quietly. This was no time or place for personal grievances.

The doctors said there was no chance that Creighton would recover consciousness. The wonder was that he had not died instantly.

When Lucius had come to stay with the two girls and be near Creighton while the spark of life lingered, Davy hastened down town.

“There is one thing I can do,” he told them. “I can’t do a thing to keep him with us—but I can do something—thank God!—to make his going *tell*.”

About midnight the nurse signed to Rose and Catherine. Involuntarily they dropped upon their knees and bowed their heads. A soul—a big soul, strong with love—was passing. Eternity was close. Another world lay near—so near. A fluttering breath, and he was gone. The room was strangely sacred. Something had gone out of it—but not to die!

Lucius stood at the window looking out. The girls could not be sure if he knew Creighton was gone. Catherine touched his elbow and he turned

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to her. She took his hand and led him to the bed. Rose was closing the brown eyes that had seen so many visions, and that had opened wonderingly after that last breath as if to emit one flash of the new radiance.

"He thought he didn't believe the Gospel of Love," she sobbed, her tears falling on the still white face. "But 'greater love hath no man than this'——"

"I'll try to finish what he laid down," Lucius McCurdy murmured. "But God knows I am not worthy to!"

CHAPTER XXVII

“WHAT A BRAVE ADVENTURE LIFE IS”

DAVY was able, as he had said, to make Creighton's death *tell*. He ignored all newspaper traditions of “scoop” and gave it as he alone knew it, freely to all. He could hope for only a colorless handling from some of the papers; he knew that from some he must expect a cruel distortion of the truth. But he aroused interest enough so that the “Find Sonia” story got to many scores of thousands of readers the next morning, and by late afternoon the cards were piled in drifts at Mulberry Street.

Also, in due time, the dream that Creighton had dreamed was eloquently told in print; and of the many persons who responded with enthusiasm to its appeal, there were a few whose interest lasted longer than a momentary burst.

Sonia came home. And it was her exceeding good fortune to come home to a sister who realized that her return was not an end, but a beginning.

Catherine was far too wise to imagine for a moment that the problem of Sonia's future was solved when Sonia was found. She knew Sonia's mind, its processes of thought, its limitations; and she

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knew that if this experience had in some ways frightened and revolted Sonia, in other ways it had opened her eyes to certain possibilities. If she went back, now, to a dull routine of work, she would inevitably compare what she had to give, there, for meagre living and few pleasures, with what she could earn in another pursuit. Even granting that both ways were distasteful to her, she would probably choose that one in which the rewards were larger. Nor was she of a type to be appealed to by any proof, however positive, of the brevity of folly's day and the squalor of its finish. She was determined to have her fling while youth pulsed in her veins and her desires were strong. As well preach thoughtful consideration of the morning to the moth that hovers round the flame, as preach any outlook upon the day after to-morrow to Sonia—mad with ardor for to-day.

Something must be found for Sonia to do which would entertain her even to the point of being exciting. And the only possible combination of work and interest that Catherine could think of for Sonia was the chorus.

She appealed to Rose. Rose said that her acquaintance in musical comedy circles was exceedingly limited; in fact, she knew only one person who had any connection therewith. That person, however, was an excellent one for their purpose. She was a girl who had gone into light

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opera deliberately, as a career—a college-bred girl, with no talent for many of the things her classmates were qualifying in, and a decided talent for entertainment. From having been the star performer in all the lighter college plays and the “preferred jester” at all college spree, she had gone in a most matter-of-fact way about the business of making her comedy gifts and her musical education productive of bread and butter. She wasn’t a star—at least, as she herself put it, “if I am, I’m so far off that I’m in the Milky Way: indistinguishable from the others of like sort around me”—but she had progressed beyond the chorus and her prospects were good.

She was playing in Chicago just then. Rose wrote to her about Sonia.

“Hurrah!” she replied. “I am so interested in that sister who looks upon the chorus as a safe retreat, that there’s hardly anything I can do that I won’t do for Sonia. I never expected to meet with such sagacity in a ‘rank outsider.’ Understand me! I’m not saying that the chorus is anything like Eden before the apple episode. But I do say that that girl Catherine has got a right idea. A girl in the chorus of a decent ‘show’ has at least as good a chance to size up ‘the foolishness of folly’ as any one ever gets; and the opportunities to sidestep the narrow path don’t get to her a bit easier or oftener than they do to the stenographer or the

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girl who sells hats or the trained nurse or—hush! but this is the bitter truth—than to the girl who sings in church quartettes. . . . Tell Sonia to take a lesson or two in carrying a tune, and about three lessons in prancing—she may call it dancing, if she prefers; I don't, since I've seen Genée. After that, if she's pretty and her figure's good, the rest ought to be easy. There's a famine in chorus ladies, especially in those who will go on the road. When we leave here, we'll have probably a dozen defections. I'll speak to the manager and see if Sonia could be examined by the New York office and sent on here. If she comes, I'll do my best to make Catherine glad she reposed faith in the maligned chorus."

The lessons were promptly begun. And Johnny was besought to search among his wide acquaintance for some one who could bring pressure to bear on that "New York Office."

In two weeks Sonia was ready to start West. She was radiantly happy and, apparently, without either a regret or a misgiving.

Lucius and Catherine saw her aboard her train. When it had pulled out Catherine stood looking after it with wistful straining eyes.

Lucius did not urge her to come away, but waited until she turned to him and signified her willingness. Then they went back to the ferry-house and waited for the first Twenty-third Street boat.

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There had been practically no intimate talk between them since Creighton died. On that night, while yet they were at the hospital, Catherine had said: “I misjudged you. Forgive me, please.” And he had replied to her with a look, a pressure of her hand.

Then came many things to think about besides themselves: Creighton’s burial; Sonia’s return; talk with persons interested in the account of what Creighton had wanted to do, and anxious to know how it might be carried into effect; preparations for Sonia’s immediate future; Catherine’s removal to new quarters which were Sonia’s also for a while; some effort—as opportunity allowed—to go on with the proof-reading; and lastly, it was being urged upon Catherine by some who had heard her plea in Tompkins Square, that she might easily qualify herself to do a much-needed work for and among “the little daughters of the tenements” by speaking *to* them of their dangers and *for* them to those who should hold their welfare at heart.

Lucius was aware of her problems, but she was unaware of his. Beyond his grief-stricken pledge at Creighton’s bedside, there had been no word from him touching the future.

To-night, as they faced homeward after seeing Sonia off, was the first real opportunity they had had to come to an understanding of each other.

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When the boat came in (the Jersey tunnels were open, but they preferred the ferry) they walked quickly through the cabins and out to the forward deck. The night was clear and crisp. The magic of the scene outspread before them was such as, to fine, apperceiving souls, can never become common. The dark river was jewelled with the lights of many moving craft. On its farther shore the great Cliff City blazed, a miracle of man's daring and enduring. In docks they passed on their lumbering way across the river, lay vessels of enormous bulk which maintained commerce with all the world. Electric signs flashed in a competition for greatest brilliance that threatened to go on unendingly until there should be no more night. Tower soared above tower into the sky; and above them all, as above the crumbled majesty of Tyre and Babylon and Corinth and Thebes: the Pleiades and Taurus, Capella and the Twins, Andromeda and Perseus, Polaris and the Great and Little Bears; friends of the nomad camel men, guides of the men that rove the seas, "sheep shepherded beyond all change or chance, moving orderly from a dawn a million years far off to a quiet fold a million years away."

For a few minutes Lucius and Catherine were silent—companionably silent—hanging together over the boat's rail and watching the scene outspread.

Then Lucius spoke. "Catherine," he asked,

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“how is it with us? Are you ever going to give me your faith again?”

She did not answer him immediately. “I think,” she said at length, “that before I tell you that, I must know what there will be for me to found my faith upon. But if,” she went on tenderly, “you had asked me a different question I could have given you a different answer—for I have *loved* you all the time.”

Encouraged by this assurance, Lucius went on to tell her of his hopes, his plans. What he was fearful of was that she would consider no future with him unless he consented to abandon his political ambition, but to his surprise she made no reference to this.

Finally he himself broached the subject.

“I shall surprise you,” she admitted. “For I have come to the conclusion that I must not interfere. In many ideals I think we are one. If there are some that we shall never share, perhaps in that we shall be the better for each other. You must show me why I should believe in some of your ideas—not ideals, but ideas of how to make the ideals come true—and I must show you why I believe in mine. So long as I am persuaded that you mean right, I shall not presume to say how you must do it. When I no longer can believe you are doing the best you can, then I—then I mustn’t love you any more.”

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"But you just said," he reminded her with a happy lover's daring, "that you loved me even when you—when you didn't believe."

She smiled up at him. "I know I did," she answered softly; "and that's just how it is with me. I have my fine philosophy of how I ought to do; that's in my head. But in my heart's a love that will love you till I die."

New Year's Eve was a time especially dear to the Inneses. Rose in particular had for the year's close a strong and tender sentiment; the boys used to declare, teasingly, that it was because of her Memoirs.

"Rose takes inventory every December thirty-first," Johnny said, "and gloats over the accomplishments of her friends as a merchant might gloat over his year's sales."

Rose admitted the gloating. "I love the 'remembering,'" she assented; "and the casting of accounts. I love the looking forward and the high hopes. And I am proud to brew my claret punch on New Year's Eve for so many persons whose ledgers for the year past show the world in debt to them, and whose hopes for the year to come are such splendid hopes that it's like having wings to share them."

There was an inspiration in beginning the New Year with Rose's faith and her claret punch.

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Every one who loved her wanted to be with her at that time.

This year they were to be there as usual: Ansel Rodman and little Mr. Penhallow; Oswald Seever and Sam Hamilton; Mary Todd and Georgie Wadsworth (Georgie was editorial adviser for one of the big publishing houses, and was said to have discovered and developed more geniuses than anybody else in the publishing world. She was a great souled woman whose touchstone for the discovery of a precious presence was: “Merit consists not in the absence of faults, but in the presence of virtues”); Nat Thayer, painter, and Ward Lamson, sculptor, whose imagination took the loftiest flights of any man in this present whose expression is in clay. Thayer and Lamson were married and would bring their wives; Sam Hamilton was glad to act as escort for Miss Todd—not for sentimental reasons, because she was fully ten years his senior, but because he admired her tremendously and enjoyed her company better than any other he knew; “Os” Seever was happy to call for Miss Wadsworth; Johnny would be down about eleven, bringing Emily; Lucius and Catherine, who had been married Christmas Day, were back from their brief tour and were coming up; Ansel Rodman had volunteered to call for Mrs. Bristow.

But Rose thought it would make Mrs. Bristow feel better if Davy went after her. So Davy went.

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About ten o'clock Bruce Norbury arrived.

Rose had finished her housewifely preparations and was sitting by the living-room fire.

She got up from the depths of the English "wing" chair when Bruce entered, and he thought he had never seen anything richer in charm than the picture that met his eye.

There had been an exquisite snowfall, and the square was blanketed in white; through the window back of Rose one got glimpses of trees plumed in downy softness, of roofs rimmed with unsullied snow. At her feet the firelight played, throwing enchanting shadows into the room. Candles in wall sconces flamed under soft yellow shades; but on the mantel two tall altar lights burned and were reflected in the mirror back of them. Goitie Moiphy, wearing a pink bow, was on the hearth-rug.

The setting was perfect: the high-backed chairs; the richness of old mahogany; the soft lights; the shadows where fancy played; the dining table beyond, with its burden of good cheer; the atmosphere of fine thought and tender affection; the fragrance of flowers; the fruity flavor of Rose's brew of punch. But no setting, Bruce thought, could enhance the loveliness of the jewel.

Rose was very beautiful to-night. She had on a gown that just touched the floor all round and set off delicately the girlishness of her slight figure. The gown was fashioned of soft satin the shade of

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a rich Killarney rose; but this deep pink was veiled in chiffon the color of London smoke. Against this her fair skin and pale brown hair showed enchantingly. The gown was not décolleté, but collarless, and about her neck Rose wore a quaint-looking necklace of old silver and pink abalone pearl.

A keenly critical feminine eye could have seen that the little gown was only a rather humble copy of some French “masterpiece”; but to the eye that loved beauty, and loved Rose, the gown was exquisite. . . . And in her hair she wore a Killarney rose, half-blown.

Bruce was unconscious of adding to the picture; but he did. His long lean figure looked admirable in evening clothes and he was, with all his intensely masculine virility, his love of the open, his zest for things strange and new, the sort of man who belonged—part of his time, at least—in a setting of this sort quite as much as Rose herself did; for he was of that type, not common in America, which has learned how to balance a love of the graces of living with a love of things that are strong and not beautiful; and the result was that he was neither a dilettante nor a boor. And he looked just this that he was. He seemed at home in Rose’s candle-lighted drawing-room and in his perfectly cut evening clothes. But it was easy to imagine him in khaki and helmet, pressing eagerly on toward

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some prize of discovery or of conquest, fighting a good fight for the things worth while in peace or in war.

"Who's coming?" he asked Rose when they had exchanged greetings.

She began to enumerate: "The close and particular few, of course—like Ansel Rodman and Sam Hamilton and Mary Todd, and Lucius and Catherine. (Catherine is going to have Mollie, did you know?) Then there'll be Johnny and Emily; and Mrs. Bristow— Davy's gone after her now——"

Bruce looked down at her understandingly, but made no comment.

"Francis Hoag is coming," she went on. Hoag was a playwright with a remarkable "punch," and was doing as much as any man in his vigorous and fearless set, to use the drama as a vehicle for the interpretation of modern life. "He's going to bring Miss Brewer." Miss Brewer was the star who was acting in Hoag's most recently produced play. "Georgie Wadsworth said she'd like to bring Edith Talbot. I don't know Miss Talbot well—have met her only once or twice, and casually at that; but I admire tremendously what she's doing. It was Georgie who kind of brought her out—you know—revealed her to herself, and turned her from doing fair work with strong possibilities, to doing strong work which realized the

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possibilities. And Georgie is the proudest person! There can never be any discussion as to which Georgie would rather do—accomplish something for herself or help some one else to do his best. I’m going to have a lovely time with her in my Memoirs.”

“I’m beginning to feel about your Memoirs as I do about Mr. Howells’s,” Bruce declared. “I’m always so sorry the people they are about couldn’t have read them. Of course, he puts the same quality of exquisite appreciation into his friendships day by day—as you do!—but there’s always something about his tender summing up in retrospect that makes me sorry for the subject because he can’t read it. I can’t help thinking how many hours of deep discouragement there must have been in the life of that man—whichever one he may be—hours in which the inspiration of Mr. Howells’s presence and faith were not possible. Wouldn’t it have been great if, when those times came, he could have had the ‘Recollections’ to read? I tell you what, Rose! If I were you, I’d write my Memoirs *now*; add a little to ’em every year—have ’em kind of *serial*, you know; and I’d give or send a copy on each New Year’s Eve to every one I’d written about. Then, all the year through, when any one got terribly discouraged—as we know that all achieving persons do—he could get out his little book and read about himself, and

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take new courage to go on and make a record for you to put in the next year's volume! Honest Injun!—as you like to say—there's a real idea for you."

He was in earnest. Rose smiled up at him, but not mockingly. "It would be a real idea—if I could write," she agreed. "But I can't."

"You don't know whether you can or not," Bruce cried. "Ellen Terry thought she couldn't. But who would wish to read anything more delightful than *her* Memoirs?"

"Not I," Rose answered. "Maybe I'll try."

In the square the revellers were blowing horns and making other noises of acclaim to the New Year. Most of these revellers were on their way up town to join the throngs that jam Broadway after the theatres are out.

"I wonder," Rose mused, "if they're really eager for the new year—all fresh and untarnished and full of promise—or if they blow horns just because they like the noise?"

"Some of each, I reckon," he replied. "It's human nature to welcome the new, the untried. I suppose that's as it should be. Life is an adventure for each one of us. With all that the others have done who have gone ahead of us, breaking the trail, the whole journey is pretty near pioneering for every one. Some people think the world gets old. It doesn't. It's new every day.

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I wish I knew how to make folks believe it! I tell you, I envy the men and women who can.”

“I think you *do* make folks believe it,” Rose declared. “Not a great many folks, perhaps, because you don’t express yourself in a medium that reaches multitudes. But you attest to every one who knows you what a brave adventure life is, and how full of treasures to be sought for. . . . And I don’t know what any one can do more than that.”

“And you think I do it?” he murmured, bending over her.

“I think you do,” she answered softly.

“Rose,” he entreated, “before the others come, let me tell you my dream for the year we shall welcome in. There’ll be brave dreams in the hearts here to-night as the bells peal and the whistles blow. But I think there won’t be any dream so sweet as mine—there couldn’t be! For my dream’s all of you—dear ‘Rose-of-all-the-world.’”

Rose’s mouth was tremulous; she could not speak. But she looked up at him with shining eyes whose light was unmistakable. . . .

There was the sound of a key in the frontdoor lock and Davy came in; Davy and Mrs. Bristow.



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